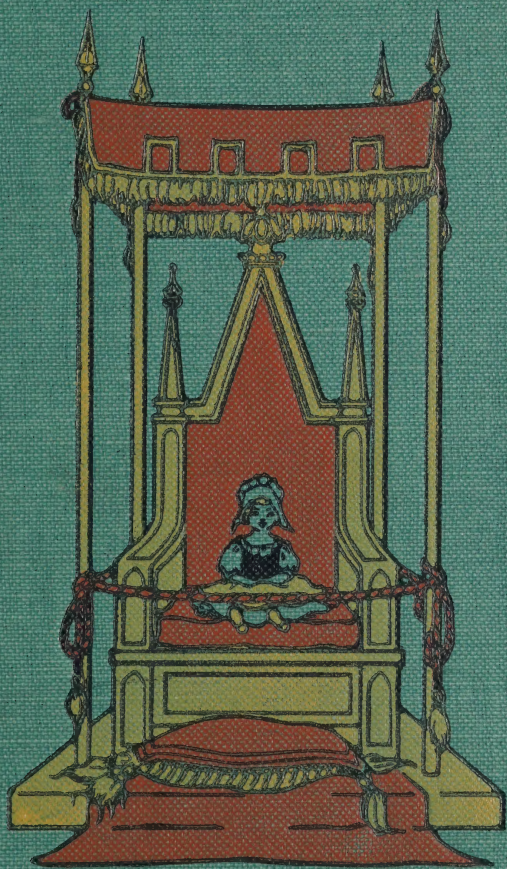


Little Jean



Helen Dawes Brown





REFERENCE LIBRARY * HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO. BOSTON, MASS.

*Archive
Collection*

* This book may not leave the Offices
and if borrowed must be returned within 7 days

By Helen Dames Brown

LITTLE JEAN. Illustrated.

TALKS TO FRESHMAN GIRLS.

HOW PHŒBE FOUND HERSELF. With
frontispiece. Sequel to "Her Sixteenth
Year."

ORPHANS.

MR. TUCKERMAN'S NIECES. Illustrated.

A BOOK OF LITTLE BOYS. Illustrated.

THE PETRIE ESTATE. Also in paper
binding

TWO COLLEGE GIRLS.

LITTLE MISS PHŒBE GAY. Illustrated.

HER SIXTEENTH YEAR. A Sequel to
"Little Miss Phœbe Gay."

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

LITTLE JEAN



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024 with funding from
Boston Public Library

<https://archive.org/details/littlejean00brow>



LITTLE JEAN

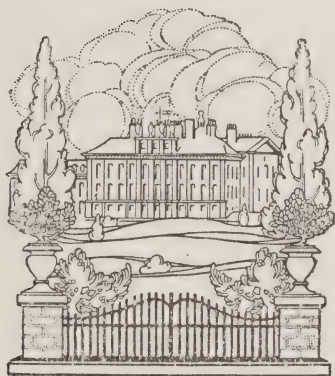
LITTLE JEAN

BY

HELEN DAWES BROWN

Author of LITTLE MISS PHOEBE GAY, Etc.

With Frontispiece



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

The Riverside Press Cambridge

1918

COPYRIGHT, 1918, BY HELEN DAWES BROWN

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Published September 1918

CONTENTS

I. The Doll that sat on a Throne	1
II. Boy Wanted	11
III. Her Ladyship	19
IV. More about Jean's Family	29
V. Where Queen Victoria was a Little Girl	38
VI. The Arts and Crafts of Jean	47
VII. A Surprise Party	55
VIII. The Abbess Hilda's Pupil	66
IX. That Awkward Boy	78
X. School, School, School	89
XI. Jean writes a Tract	99
XII. A Secret Society	108
XIII. Little Mother	118
XIV. "O Beautiful! my Country!"	127

LITTLE JEAN

I

THE DOLL THAT SAT ON A THRONE

AT Christmas the two young aunts had said that Jean must have one last doll that had some character, a doll that she could love and remember; for Jean would be ten in May, 1914, and it could not be expected that she would care for dolls much longer.

The young aunts searched the shops. They would have no pink-cheeked blondes, whose brains were plainly sawdust.

"There," said Aunt Rosalie at last, "I see one that looks nearly as bright as Jean herself. Some people would call Jean a plain child, but she looks bright enough to make up."

"This doll has fluffy hair and a sweet mouth, even if she has an intellectual brow. I think she is a suitable companion for Jean. Let's buy her on the spot," said Aunt Dorothy.

"We might dress her in character — Queen Elizabeth or Portia, she's of such a superior sort," they said when they reached home.

But the practical aunt objected to fine clothes. She looked thoughtfully at a photograph that she had brought from Holland. It was a charming portrait of the Queen in the costume of a peasant girl.

"Supposing we dress the doll like this picture, and name her Wilhelmina."

So the aunts took down their boxes of ribbons and velvets and laces, and by Christmas-time had turned out a Dutch maiden in black velvet bodice and white stomacher, with orange silk apron and blue petticoat, and with a cap that made you want to kiss her!

Wilhelmina was a fine modern doll, for not only she looked intelligent, but she could stand and sit, and did not spend her life lying down, like dolls in the old times. She stood beside the Christmas tree, and held out her arms to her new mamma, who took her to her heart.

In the winter, Jean's father said, "How would you like to go to Europe, young lady? We shall sail in April."

A DOLL SITS ON A THRONE 3

"If I could take Williemia with me," said Jean firmly.

"A doll would be rather hard to pack."

"I'd carry her every step; I should n't ever wish to be separated. I would n't ever allow her to be squeezed in a trunk."

A few weeks later, ladies on the steamer deck were saying: "Have you noticed that little girl with the Dutch doll? You should overhear the child's talk. She seems to be bringing up her doll to be a great lady, teaching her manners. 'Queens don't toe in,' I heard her say; another time, '*Queens* don't point.'"

When they landed at Rotterdam, Jean was as speechless as her doll, with the wonder and excitement.

"This is Wilhelmina's native land," said Mr. McGill. "What are her impressions?" He liked to use large words, and see Jean wink and laugh.

"She's going to keep a diary of her impressions, a little bit of a red one."

"Well, you see she puts down all her adventures."

Wilhelmina had a number: at The Hague she fell under an automobile, and at Scheveningen she

was nearly drowned; but it was in a royal palace of Holland that she had the adventure of her life. Jean was by that time a rather experienced traveller, and cast a careless eye over tapestries, portraits, and carved tables. What she saw first in a palace chamber was the shining, slippery floor, and the magnificent chance for a run and a slide.

“No, dear,” her mother would say firmly.

The next best thing in a palace was the view from the great windows. Jean would run to look out upon the gardens and terraces, with their flowers and fountains.

This spacious hall, besides its carvings and sculptures and pictures, contained one object that she had never seen before. At one end of the room was a little platform covered with thick red carpet, and on this stood a golden chair with velvet cushions and a velvet footstool. Above the chair was a canopy, and around the little platform was stretched a large red cord with heavy tassels, supported by four golden posts.

“The Throne!” said Mrs. McGill, in a hushed voice.

“Does the Queen sit down on it, and nobody

else ever?" asked Jean, excited. "Oh, I'd like to just once!"

"These gilded chairs will get into the furniture shops on Fifth Avenue some day," said Jean's father.

Still Jean gazed at the gorgeous chair, and drew nearer and nearer to the rope that guarded it.

"It will soon be closing-time," said Mrs. McGill. "We must see that portrait at the farther end of the room. The guidebook says we must not miss it. I see people are going away."

Jean's parents moved to the other part of the room and made intelligent comments to each other upon the famous picture. These remarks so absorbed their attention that they scarcely noticed Jean had not followed them. While she could gaze upon the velvet and gold of a real throne, pictures of queer people in queer clothes had for her but small interest.

The attendants were beginning to look to the doors and windows, and she and her doll were quite alone by the wonderful chair. Jean moved closer and closer to the dais; she put out a hand and smoothed the crimson cord. She reached below the cord, and put her hand on the arm of

the chair. Then, with a dive, Jean was under the rope and had placed her own Wilhelmina squarely on the Throne!

"On ferme, on ferme!" the guard was saying at the other end of the room, while the door near by was already closed. Jean heard her mother's hurried call, and quite lost her head. The horror of being locked up in a palace overnight!

"On ferme, mademoiselle," said the guard in French, and added, in more French, what Jean supposed to be a threat. She rushed to her mother, and Wilhelmina was left behind!

"Why, child, where is your doll?" asked Mrs. McGill as they reached home.

"I lost her," answered Jean, with something like a sob.

"*Where* did you lose her?" People always ask that.

"In the palace."

"How could you? Laid her down, I suppose, and then got *absorbed*. It will not do, Jean, to be absent-minded and forgetful at your age. We must make inquiries to-morrow. It is foolish of me to let you carry that doll about sight-seeing."

It was really too dreadful a thing to tell even

her mother; for the more Jean thought about it, the more enormous a crime it seemed, to put anybody on another person's throne. She believed it was what they called High Treason, for she had read Dickens's "Child's History of England" and knew what happened to such people as Lady Jane Grey and Lady Arabella Stuart when some one tried to put *them* on the throne of England. This was not quite the same case, Jean's common sense told her, but in this little girl common sense was all mixed up with imagination, and imagination saw her beloved Wilhelmina beheaded before daylight.

Or would she spend the night on the throne of Holland? For a wild moment Jean was glad she had given Wilhelmina such a tremendous experience. But in the morning the stern guard would find her, and would be enraged at such presumption. Probably he would put the audacious doll in the palace waste-basket, and nothing would ever be heard of her again. No doubt he would call it "an insult to Holland and Holland's Queen," — such was the fine language that Jean borrowed from her reading. Would they find her out, the culprit owner, and punish her for her

“deed”? Jean, from her experience of story-books, rather thought she might be “brought before the Queen.” With terror and delight she pictured the scene: if she but carried Wilhelmina in her arms, she believed she might be forgiven, for the Queen was known to be the kindest of ladies, and moreover, had a little girl of her own.

How could Jean go off to sleep with her little comrade a prisoner in a palace, alone, uncared-for, staring into the dark? Common sense said Wilhelmina was a doll; imagination said she was a queen for a night. That thought failed to comfort Jean; she came back to the plain, sad truth that she had lost her doll and would have to make the rest of her journey without this loved companion.

Three days passed, in which Mr. McGill was much occupied with business from America, and Mrs. McGill had found a friend of her girlhood at the next table in the dining-room. Wilhelmina was forgotten by both parents. On the fourth day, when the American agent and the old school-friend had taken their departure, Mr. McGill at breakfast picked up a paper published in French, and translated aloud the morning news. Jean

A DOLL SITS ON A THRONE 9

admired him greatly that he could do this so glibly, and watched him with bright eyes.

“Hullo, here’s a queer story, — something about a doll. *Poupée* — that’s doll, is n’t it? Watchman in the palace — found left behind — by somebody — and where do you guess? Seated on the throne of Holland! I bet you that was some American child that did that trick!”

“*It could n’t have been our Jean!*” (But nothing less than small capitals would express the emotions of Jean’s mother.)

“Oh, will they put me in prison? Oh, was it treason? I just wanted her to be a queen one single minute, and they shut the doors so quick. Oh, what will they do to me?”

Her father laughed till the waiter looked at him solemnly. “I’ll call round at the palace,” said Mr. McGill, “and I’ll give that old fellow a good tip. Jean, you’d better come along and help rescue your doll.”

“Oh, no, no!” She clung to her mother. “Will they get me?”

“I’ll get that doll,” said her heroic father, looking at his watch.

And true enough, in a tiny room where the

palace guard withdrew now and then and took a nap, there, perched this time on the top of a fat, round-faced clock, was the lost Wilhelmina, with the same calm and superior look with which she had sat upon a throne.

II

BOY WANTED

WHEN Jean was sent on errands, there was one shop window in Longwood that she loved best. The shop was kept by two sisters, Miss Alma and Miss Dora Penniwell. These names had stood over the doorway till a niece from the city had advised her aunts to have a new sign, with "The Little Shop," in old English letters. The niece begged them never, never to say "store."

The new name attracted Jean, and she stood longer than ever before that fascinating window. Laid out in regular lines, on dainty white, were the very things you would like to have, and if you could n't have them, it was almost as good to gaze your fill. Jean studied the beautiful buttons, the pins of every kind, the fancy brooches, ribbons, bags, pin-cushions. There were baby hoods and baby socks that Jean fairly cooed over. Happy Miss Alma and Miss Dora, who could own and handle and arrange these delight-

ful objects! One thing was certain, a Little Shop would be Jean's choice of all careers.

One day Jean stopped as usual before the window, and this time she saw standing erect among the bright buttons a stiff bit of cardboard. "Boy Wanted," it said in big black letters. Jean studied this inscription for some minutes. Then she opened the door and walked in. Miss Alma was tying up a parcel in a gray paper with a pink string.

"Would n't a *girl* do?" asked Jean earnestly.

"A girl to run errands and deliver packages?"

"They are very small packages in this kind of a store — pins and ribbons and such things," Jean pleaded.

"Dora, what do you say to this?" Miss Alma turned to her sister.

"I should say it was a boy we wanted." It happened that these sisters were on two sides of the great question as to what should be woman's work in this world.

"I see no reason," said Miss Alma, "why a girl would not do as well, a strong, well-grown girl, and intelligent."

Jean was proud to hear herself thus described.

She stood up very straight, and looked more intelligent than ever.

"I see no reason why a little girl should n't be useful and earn some money, as well as a boy. She would probably dust much better than a boy."

Jean hated what you may call plain dusting, and loved fancy dusting. To her mind the Little Shop offered no end of delightful objects to be handled and examined under the name of dusting.

"I'm a great duster," she told the Miss Penniwells.

"What would your parents think of it?" It was Miss Dora who held to the old ideas.

"My mother has gone to visit her cousin, and my father will just think it's funny."

Miss Alma conferred with Miss Dora. "I suppose we might find a girl easier to manage than a boy — there would be that advantage," said Miss Dora. "I should enjoy having a little girl *around*, myself."

"I see no reason why she should n't do what a boy of her age would do in the store — *shop*. I believe in giving a girl a chance. It's her vacation and you can see she is a restless child."

Jean reported at home, "Oh, Papa, I've got a place, and I'm going to earn two dollars a week. They said I must ask you first, though. Won't you let me, *please*?"

"Explain yourself, my girl."

Jean told her story. Great-Aunt Nancy, who was keeping house in her niece's absence, sat at the head of the table, speechless with amazement.

"I declare," said Mr. McGill, "the world is getting ahead pretty fast if my daughter is going into business at the age of eleven. I'm not sure the law allows it. I'm not sure your mother would. But as long as it's the Miss Penniwells, you might try it for a few days and find out for yourself. Rather a joke on your genteel family, don't you say so, Aunt Nancy?"

"I've nothing to say. She's your child." Gentle Aunt Nancy had been invited to come and take care of the family, but she never interfered with anybody, least of all with the maid in the kitchen, and never in the world with her young grand-niece. She sat in mild wonder at the "ways" of a Western town.

Jean set out after her early suburban breakfast to begin her day's work; and a day's work is a

good thing for anybody, provided it is not a misfit.

The dusting proceeded gaily, after Miss Dora had swept out the shop herself.

"The sidewalk will have to go to-day," Jean heard her employer saying. "It needs washing down, but it's no job for her."

Jean began to be not quite happy. She looked at the clock — only a quarter past nine, and lunch at home, that dear home, was four hours away.

There was another conference of the two sisters which Jean partly overheard. "That large package of yarn has got to be delivered in West Longwood, but you would n't wish her to ride with the butcher's boy on his market truck, would you, now?"

Miss Alma's belief that a "woman could go anywhere if she only behaved properly" did not somehow provide for this particular case. "I'll go myself," she said.

Jean was set to sorting buttons, and then to straightening boxes, but these jobs were soon done, and there was nothing left but to sit still on a hard little stool, while Miss Dora was busy with customers.

"I wish Alma would get back," said her sister, looking at a high stepladder and then at a shelf that ran around the shop. "I don't trust myself on a stepladder since I had that fall."

"I can go up one. I always climb trees." And Jean sprang up joyfully.

Miss Dora shook her head. "Not with that big box to bring down. I should n't be doing right by your mother."

By this time somebody had telephoned for a skein of red wool, and Jean was despatched with it, at last feeling useful and important.

"We both of us wanted to go to that tea at the church just before closing-time. How can we leave this child to shut up for the night? Well, I suppose one of us can stay at home," said Miss Dora patiently.

Jean appeared in the doorway. "It was the wrong kind. I have to go back."

"Not in this hot noonday sun," said both the Miss Penniwells. They advised her to wait till she had had her lunch. "Don't you want to run home now? You need n't hurry to get back. We don't have many customers along noontime."

Jean sat at luncheon with Aunt Nancy, who tried in the kindest way to find out from her how the morning had passed. Jean was very silent. She was thinking, and the Miss Penniwells were thinking, too.

"We shall have to tell her," said Miss Dora. "I hate to."

"I want to give my fellow-women a fair chance," Miss Alma answered her. "I glory in their new occupations and their new achievements," she argued.

"So do I, when they're anyways suited to them."

"Well, I'd give them the chance to find out what is suited to them."

"Jean has had a chance. It's a boy that's wanted still. She's a bright little thing enough, for something else. I could see her making up her mind about you and me and herself. It would n't surprise me if she resigned and we did n't have to tell her. I shan't fret about it."

When closing-time came, Jean rose from her stool in the corner behind the counter. She had been listening to Miss Dora as she pleaded with a man to spare time to clean their basement.

“Miss Dora,” said Jean, very politely, “I don’t think I am enough like a boy, though I can climb trees. Won’t you please excuse me from coming any more, except when I come to buy things?”

This speech Jean had found very hard to make, though she had studied on it all the afternoon.

Miss Dora seized her in her arms and kissed her gratefully. “You are a dear child, and I would a great deal rather have you than a boy for most things.”

Jean was glad Miss Alma had gone to the tea.

There was trouble when Miss Dora tried to pay Jean a day’s salary. She left the money on the stool in the corner, and would carry away only a bunch of roses. She and the Miss Penniwells were the best of friends from that time on, though the day in the Little Shop was the longest day Jean could remember.

III

HER LADYSHIP

JEAN was often talked over by her aunts, and was carefully studied by her modern mother. Mrs. McGill read a paper at her Club on "The Only Child," and frankly owned up to the faults of her Jean. To be sure, she went home and gave the child an extra petting. The young aunts had studied Child Culture, and had much advice to give about the training of their little niece. They regretted that she was inclined to be untidy.

"I am afraid that it's her temperament," said Aunt Rosalie. "You never can make her tidy by any of the ordinary methods. I'm sure you can't by fault-finding."

"Supposing you try your method," said their sister, Mrs. McGill. "I have done my best."

"Do you give us full permission?"

The aunts began at once. "Hear what this book says, Jean! How would you have liked being a little girl in 1820?" said Aunt Dorothy.

"Little Harriet Beecher visits her grandmother, and her older sister writes to her: 'You are now where you will learn to stand and sit straight, and hear what people say to you, and sit still in your chair, and learn to sew and knit well, and be a good girl in every particular; and if you don't learn while you are with Aunt Harriet, I am afraid you never will.' There, Jean, you hear that!"

"Oh, could n't I jump up and down at all? I'm glad it's *now*."

"They had some good ideas even in 1820," said Aunt Rosalie. "They taught little girls to be orderly and pick up their things."

Jean answered not a word.

"I know a little girl that will put away her dolls' clothes and let her own drop on the floor."

Jean said nothing.

"And loves to make dolls' clothes, and hates to sew a button on her own."

Jean could not deny it. She gave a tremendous sigh. "I wish, oh, I wish I had a lady's maid! I wish I was her ladyship."

"What book have you been reading now? Tell us quick."

"A lovely one about little Lady Bertha. Her father was a earl."

"And you're feeling blue because your father is an insurance man?"

"No; it's because I have to get the snarls out of my own hair." Jean gave another of her sighs.

"My own right hand my cup-bearer shall be.' Don't you remember, Rose, how Professor Mann was always quoting that to us? It's prettier in the Latin verse: 'My own right hand my Ganymede shall be.' Jean, do you understand?"

Jean looked bright and hard at her young aunt. "Wait on yourself: that's what it means," she gasped delightedly.

"Professor Mann used to say, 'The king's servant is the king himself.' Can you see through that, you child?"

"It means," Jean answered slowly, — "it means I'm her ladyship and her lady's maid right at the same time."

"The very *thing*! Now, let's see you do it. It would be the best game in the world! Let's all play it!"

"First I will be her and then I will be myself. Can I name her anything I want to?"

“Anything,” said the aunts.

“Carlotta! And I’m Lady Jean! Now I’ll try it: ‘Carlotta, won’t you please go and get my rubbers off the piazza and put them in the little pen in the hall closet?’ ‘Yes, my lady,’” said Jean in a little squeaking voice. Then in her own: “Now see me do it!”

“I should think the new maid was bright enough to put away her mistress’s clothes just come from the laundry,” said Aunt Dorothy. “I saw them lying on her ladyship’s bed. Lady’s maids, if they are good for anything, are great at arranging bureau drawers.”

“Pick it up” — “Put it back” — “Fold it up” — all these tiresome rules became a quite different thing when Carlotta was bidden by her mistress.

“Laying out your things and putting them away again are just what you want Carlotta to do for you. You have a nice room all to yourself, and a place for everything, but not everything in its place, I’m very much afraid. That is just what Carlotta is for, don’t you see? You like to have your room pretty. It never can be pretty unless it’s tidy.”

Jean looked very serious.

"I should have Carlotta dust it every day, and wipe up the borders every other day. If you are her ladyship, you want to be elegant, and you never can be elegant if you're not neat."

"I'll tell Carlotta," said Jean demurely.

"If I were in your mother's place, I should let Carlotta sweep your room once a week. You and Carlotta will have such fun taking things down and putting them back. You must give her careful instructions. What a housekeeper your ladyship will grow to be, and what a help to your mother! We must fit out Carlotta with a dust-cap, just the prettiest we can find. Shall it be blue?"

"And all the time her ladyship will be sitting in the parlor dressed in blue satin," said Jean, with a funny face.

"Having the stupidest time, poor thing!" Aunt Rosalie said.

"Your mother will be glad to hear of Carlotta's arrival. She is a busy woman, with all she has to do, and only Frieda."

"Frieda will be the most s'prised. Don't tell anybody till my room is done. I am going to have

it in the most beautiful order before mamma comes home."

"Tell Carlotta to put a little vase of flowers on the bureau as long as the garden flowers last. Put some nice books on the table, and have all the writing things ready on the little desk we gave you Christmas. Remember, you are her ladyship, and there must be everything a lady likes, because you are going to be a real one some day, Jean, dear."

Jean listened, smiling shyly. *Lady* was a beautiful word that she liked to say and liked to hear.

"Carlotta will have to take beautiful care of her ladyship's hair, and of everything that helps to make her mistress neat and pretty."

"That's the way I used to Willieminna. I don't play with dolls now. I'm eleven years old."

"Run, get ready, dear, and we'll take you into town with us. Tell Carlotta to lay all your things out before you begin to put them on. Be sure she finds both gloves, and don't let her forget your handkerchief, and tell her to leave the room tidy after her mistress goes out. There, away with you! O Dorothy, do you suppose we can ever live up to this ourselves?"

“It is a great deal worse putting your things away than it is taking them out,” said Jean, returning. “Carlotta did n’t mind getting out my things a bit.”

“I know it, dear, alas, I know it! That’s when you have to be firm with Carlotta. Now we are off! We can leave Carlotta behind.”

“Now I’m just her ladyship,” said Jean, with a great air.

Finding a dust-cap and apron for Carlotta was one of their delightful errands; then looking up some kitchen things for their busy sister; and *then*, soda water (Jean’s, raspberry, through a straw); and next, ribbons and collars for the aunts, and one more bow for Jean’s hair, — with shop windows all along the way that went far ahead of the Miss Penniwells’: it was a “good time” from beginning to end.

“Carlotta did n’t want to put away my things,” said Jean, at home again. “Her legs were tired, but I told her she had to.”

“That’s like the little boy that said, ‘I made me mind Me.’”

“It’s hardest,” sighed Jean, “making yourself brush your teeth. Carlotta can’t do that.”

"Yet," said Aunt Rosalie, "when a little girl does n't want to brush her teeth, and does it, there is just so much more *to* her — she has just so much more character."

Plainly there was no shirking of teeth, even if you were a real ladyship.

"I'll make you an offer," said Aunt Dorothy; "since to-morrow is sweeping day, and your mother is off at her Hospital Board, I'll come and show Carlotta how to do your room, and if your father were going to be a millionaire some day, I should say exactly the same. Every girl should know how to take care of her room."

"I can make my bed, all but turn it."

"You must make it beautifully, not a wrinkle, not a crease, all smooth, white, lovely, ready for sweet dreams."

"I get it pretty crooked," said Jean humbly.

"You are not a stupid child, Jean, but the point is, to be just as bright at one thing as you are at another. You have to be all-round in this age of the world, and ready for anything."

"What is 'all-round'?" asked Jean, thinking of the full moon, the roundest thing she knew.

“Not good for just one thing and no good for anything else, but so you can do all sorts of things *beautifully*.”

They had a merry time while Aunt Rosalie organized the “doing” of her ladyship’s room next day. Carlotta was attired in her cap and apron, which proved very becoming.

“It feels good to sweep,” said Jean, with enthusiasm.

“To be sure, athletics do ‘feel good.’”

Then there was the fun of rearranging the room; of standing off to admire and criticise, “to see if her ladyship is satisfied.”

On another day came Aunt Dorothy with some of the loveliest hangers ever seen, bound with pink ribbons and with blue, — hangers that made it simply a pleasure to put away one’s things. Aunt Rosalie gave her niece some gay-flowered boxes, in which Jean stowed her possessions so securely that she had some trouble in finding them again; but on the whole, there was much less out-of-breath, last-minute searching, with these new devices of her aunts’.

“I’m much obliged to you girls,” said Jean’s mother. “If only it will last!”

“I’m not ready to promise,” said Aunt Rosalie; “but out of play she may form habits, and habits make everything easy. I learned that from Professor Mann in Psychology VI!”

IV

MORE ABOUT JEAN'S FAMILY

JEAN had what no other little girl at school possessed, a great-grandmother. When there was boasting going on, such as "I've got a new baby brother," then Jean spoke up, "*I've* got a great-grandmother, and she will be ninety her next birthday."

Grandma Wilkins was a real Old Lady, and wore a cap. Her younger sister, Great-Aunt Nancy, was only seventy-nine, and refused to. Everybody else belonging to Jean was young. There was her slim, erect grandmother who had the prettiest hats in the family. There was her own dear mother, who wore dresses with guimpes, like her daughter's. As for her father, he had never got over being a boy, his wife often told him. And Jean herself said, "You're just the same as if I had a big brother — only bigger."

"Just you wait. I can be the stern parent when the time comes."

Jean dared him gleefully.

"Take care, old girl!"

"You're an old boy!" And Jean ducked under the table, and the fun began.

Mr. McGill had, indeed, many of the qualifications of a pleasant father. For one thing, he read aloud well. He would read you bits out of the newspaper as dramatic, Aunt Rosalie said, as if they were on a "program." (Aunt Rosalie would make fun of pronunciations.)

Mr. McGill had other accomplishments: he could do a cock-fight with his fingers, and make shadow rabbits on the wall. He had also gifts of carpentry, and had made for Jean a house in the great tree that was almost as good as the Swiss Family Robinson's.

Mrs. McGill read books about the child, and took notes on her own daughter; but as Jean was a little girl who preferred outdoors to indoors, running to sitting, was always hungry, and always sleepy when night came, she grew very much as things in the garden did. She and her mother were good play-fellows, but best of all was when her father joined them, and the three started off for a day on the Lake, or a Saturday in the "real country."

"Fun" with her aunts was the next best kind. Mr. McGill called these young ladies First Aunt and Second Aunt, in the way of the old plays. He appeared to think sisters-in-law rather a joke, at the same time that he paid them many compliments.

Jean admired her aunts for reasons not altogether wise, perhaps. She liked their pretty names, Rosalie Dale and Dorothy Dale, and their pretty clothes, and because, whenever they came to her house, they had so many interesting things to tell. "Don't say anything while I am upstairs," Jean would beg, when sent on an errand.

Their gowns and hats and ribbons and chains were the constant admiration of their niece. But the young aunts did not confine their interests to clothes. They did "a little to help" — so they called philanthropy — in every good work going on in Longwood; and first they made their widowed mother happy, and their aged grandmother, and lent a hand in all the households of their family. "How should I bring up Jean without them?" said the elder sister who had married John McGill.

Moreover, Rosalie spent a considerable amount of her valuable time upon a young man named Richard Burr, and Dorothy, upon another named Fred Dunbar. Jean looked at both these youths with sharp eyes whenever she met them. They were extraordinarily polite to her, but she was barely civil in her treatment of them. She was particularly cold to Richard Burr. "I should n't wonder if I had him for a nuncle," she confided to Betty Lee.

Her grandmother, Mrs. Dale, Jean thought the kindest and politest person she had ever known. "Consideration" was a word Jean heard her often use, which seemed to be something that made everybody comfortable and happy.

The little girl stood in considerable awe of Great-Grandma Wilkins. This grandmother had always some task ready for Jean. For instance, she promised her a bright half-dollar for committing to memory certain verses of the good Doctor Watts. "Self-examination" they were called, and to Jean's lively mind they suggested an interesting plan for bedtime, if one could only keep awake.

"Let not soft slumber close your eyes,
 Before you've recollected thrice
 The train of action through the day!
 Where have my feet chose out their way?
 What have I learnt, where'er I've been,
 From all I've heard, from all I've seen?
 What know I more that's worth the knowing?
 What have I done that's worth the doing?
 What have I sought that I should shun?
 What duty have I left undone,
 Or into what new follies run?
 These self-inquiries are the road
 That leads to virtue and to God."

"Excellent," said Grandma Wilkins, as she bestowed the half-dollar, "and recited with good understanding. Be sure you spend your money prudently."

Jean went downstairs to show her treasure, and "real grandma" and the aunts made her repeat her poem. Mrs. Dale looked at her with eyes of love, but those young aunts laughed and laughed again, till they said nothing would do but to have the poem once more.

"Girls, I am ashamed of you," their mother said. "I've half a mind to order you to learn it and recite it yourselves.

"What duty have I left undone,
 Or into what new follies run?"

she repeated. "I learned those verses when I was young." That satisfied Jean, whose confidence in her poem had been a little shaken by the aunts.

Jean had other relatives who were not present in Longwood. There was her mother's young brother Ben away at college. There was her father's brother from the Far West, who would drop in and spend the night, transact his business in the city, and take the earliest possible train for home. He tried to prove to the family how superior was the great Northwestern country to the Middle West. Jean listened to tales of mountains and valleys and fruits and flowers till she dreamed of a golden country somehow located in the sunset.

Jean's family would not be complete if I did not mention Frieda, the Swedish maiden with a mind of her own, who cooked so excellently and who "kept her kitchen like a parlor." Jean had liked her way of speaking English, thinking it fresher and more interesting than most people's. She tried talking after that manner herself, and felt hurt that Frieda entirely misunderstood her, called her "a sassy yoong one," and drove her out of the kitchen.

I should not omit from Jean's circle the seamstress who came once a week. Miss Nixon liked her Wednesdays with the McGill family: "they made you feel as if you belonged," she said. She often mentioned that she had been born in Massachusetts. "Funny how we New England people get out here. And now I'm here, I would n't go back. I feel as if I could n't breathe among them hills, shut in so. Well, I've had my trials and I've had my mercies. I did n't get rich just by coming West. I have n't made so much money as I expected, and I did n't suppose I should. But I don't propose to belong to the whiners, whatever I do."

Miss Nixon prided herself on keeping up with the fashions. "It's no use trying to live in this age of the world if you're two days behind in anything," she declared. "All the same, it's a treat to me to hear Old Lady Wilkins talk. I was making a black silk for her last week, and she give me her views of the present age. It was just complete!"

Should you include in the family the hens and chickens and their enemy the cat? Jean did, at any rate. She had loved the cat until there were

little chickens and the cat began to show an evil disposition, and stole about the hen-yard with such a wicked eye that Jean lost all affection for her.

Jean would stand and watch the little chicks and talk baby talk to them. When three at once rode on the old hen's back, the little girl danced for joy. It was the cunningest circus she had ever seen, she said. She was sorry her chicks had such very bad table manners, but she loved them with all their faults.

When the stealthy old cat put her head round the corner of the hen-coop, creeping closer and closer, then Jean burst out, to the astonishment of her mother at the window, "O-o-oh, you wicked tiger, prowling round a Christian settlement!" These were the very words Jean had heard from a missionary the last Sunday. She roared them at the cat, and the guilty creature fled to a shed roof.

"*I* call the house and the garden part of the family," Jean had said once, therefore I must add a word about them.

She had been mystified by her father's rather slighting remark that they lived in the same

suburban house that you saw from Boston to San Francisco. Jean thought it much nicer than the rest of America. It had porches back and front with rambler roses, and inside there were no end of nooks and corners and pretty windows with little panes, that opened on the garden. For the garden was on three sides of the house, and that was Home quite as much as indoors. The back garden with its shining green vegetables and rows of bright flowers growing up between, was Jean's favorite spot, for there was the bird bath, and there was the jolly sailor boy that they had brought home from Gloucester. This little man was mounted on top of a clothes-post, and turned in the wind and swung his oars gaily.

For mystery and fascination there was nothing in the garden to equal the sun-dial. As she and her grandmother had stood once and watched the shadow, Grandma had said reverently, "A message from the heavens." Little Jean took this to mean "from Heaven," and ever after thought of the sun-dial as connecting her garden and her Home with Heaven above.

V

WHERE QUEEN VICTORIA WAS A LITTLE GIRL

BETTY LEE was the nice kind of friend that likes to hear you talk about your travels. Betty often said to Jean, "Now tell about when you went to Europe." Indeed, she wanted to hear the same story over and over and would call for her favorites. "Jean, tell me about going to Windsor Castle, and then let's play we went to a ball there, and what we wore and the princes we danced with, the way you said before." Another time it was, "Oh, *tell* about the *château* with dungeons, and let's play again we're prisoners and escaped." And often Betty would call for "Where Queen Victoria was a little girl."

"I must begin at the beginning, then, and it will take a good while."

"Mother won't care how long I stay," said Betty. "She knows I'm safe."

They were sitting in the house in the tree, which her kind and useful father had built for Jean. In this spot, of a long afternoon, she often

talked about her travels; for the thing this little American was proudest of, was "I have been to Europe." Betty Lee had a generous heart, and saw no offence in other people's travels. She would far rather hear about things than read about them.

"I know all about Queen Victoria," said Betty comfortably.

"Everybody does," Jean answered; "but *I* have seen some of her dresses in glass cases. Now, shall I begin? First, you go on top of a bus, and on top of a bus is the most int'resting way to ride in London. You climb up a cunning little staircase, and hold on to the rail as hard as if you were climbing a tree, and all the time it's going so fast, and papa keeps saying behind you, 'Hang on, hang on!' Exciting! Then, when you are up, you can see down into things — over walls into gardens, and into carts and carriages, and you see the funny tops of their hats that you never saw before. It's real movies, — not picture movies, — people going and going and never stopping, and you going faster and leaving them behind and never seeing these same people ever again in your life. And there are shop windows

with everything there is in the world there in London."

"I should like to ride on top of a bus," said Betty humbly.

"Then, when we got to Kensington, and climbed down at the palace gate, it was just as different as it could be. Inside, it was the *stillest*! It was all green grass and big great trees. It was little fine, soft grass. When you stepped on it, it felt like the library rug, and it made things seem soft and still, just that way. You did n't want to talk loud. It was funny, that grass was."

"*You're* funny!" said Betty, without explaining.

"There was a garden before we got to the palace. Flowers in England are different from America and trees are different. Mamma says it's the moisture. The trees are so thick and big, and the flowers have so many on their stems, and they last so long. The flowers at Kensington Palace were lovely when I saw them out the windows. I like palace windows."

Betty listened respectfully. "Tell more about the garden."

"It was the very same one where little Queen Victoria rode up and down in a dear little bit of a carriage, drawn by a little donkey, with blue ribbons. They used to eat breakfast in the garden, too.

"She was born in a downstairs room looking right into the garden, — there's a brass plate. And when she was an old lady, and was a grandma and a great-grandma, she had all the rooms she was a little girl in swept and dusted, and she invited all her people to come and see.

"On the outside," Jean continued, "Kensington Palace was n't a bit my idea of a palace. My idea of a palace is statues and fountains and towers. Except its being very large, this one looks like houses I saw when I went East. My father's aunt lived in one in Salem. Kensington Palace goes straight up and down that way, bare-looking and square-looking, but very, very long and large. My mother said it looked sensible, as if a child could be well brought up there, even if she was a queen."

"Tell about the inside," said Betty.

"The inside was much grander than the outside, and that's the way in England. We went

up a beautiful staircase that had landings and windows, and that's the way in England, too. We went into a long gallery, all windows and pictures, and don't you suppose she ran up and down there rainy days?"

The sympathetic Betty was sure she did.

"The first room I saw that looked gorgeous enough for a palace was called the Cupola Room. It was where little Queen Victoria was christened, and *I* thought it was perfectly lovely, — only my father and mother said it was n't Sir Christopher Wren, like the other parts of the palace. My mother thinks there is nobody like that man. Did you ever hear of him?"

"No," answered Betty humbly.

"I had n't once," said Jean kindly. "He was a architect."

"I know what that is, because my father is one."

"Just imagine, when she was a little bit of a baby, a month old, in a long, long dress, they brought her into that room, and all the kings and queens and dukes and duchesses stood around, dressed up in their very best, and they had a gold font that they brought from the Tower of London, that they never get out except for baby

princes and princesses, and then the Archbishop of Canterbury christened her."

Betty wondered if the baby cried. Jean had no doubt she did, with all those strange, splendid people about her—enough to scare any sensible baby.

"Hurry and get to the nursery—I like that best."

"You have to go through rooms and rooms that give you a crick in your neck looking at the gorgeous ceilings—only I did n't. The nursery is just a nice, big room to play in, and when you look out the windows, it's exactly like the country,—grass and trees and a pond,—you'd never think it was London, it's so still. You can't see a house. My mother said, 'They made her a healthy little country girl, to begin with.'"

"Tell about her playthings."

"The best of all was to see the things she owned—not such very grand things, either. There was the very, very play-house that she had, with an upstairs and downstairs, and funny little furniture. And there were toys that had had a pretty hard time—one was a man on horseback that had lost his head off."

"My mother said she thought the bedroom was most int'resting, because there was where the princess slept all the time she was a little girl till the day they came to tell her that her uncle was dead and she was Queen of England, at five o'clock in the morning. She was a little young queen, only eighteen years old. She went right downstairs to the parlor to see the lord and the bishop who had called to tell her. How do you suppose she felt going down those stairs, Betty Lee, the first five minutes she was a queen? And very soon after that she went away, and never lived there again. I suppose Kensington Palace was n't good enough, but *I* think it was dear!"

"Tell more about when she was a little girl. You always do."

"I read it in a book, that part," said Jean honestly.

"They took the greatest pains with her manners," she began again. "It is pretty hard work to be a queen, you have to have such manners. She had stricter rules than most little girls. They tried to make her very simple and sensible, and eat bread and milk, and go outdoors every morning and afternoon, and go to bed early. She did

a lot of things like other little girls, such as watering the flowers in the garden, and spilling the water over her feet. That's just like me!

"They did n't dress her up much like a princess. She had little white dresses and big straw hats, and generally some blue ribbons because she had blue eyes.

"She had lessons and lessons; for she had to learn everything perfectly. You do if you are a princess. My mother says her handwriting was beautiful because she was so well taught, and took such pains. She was meaning a moral for me. They taught her to dance, and she loved to dance and to ride horseback. But she had to learn arithmetic too, and she studied languages hard. Queens have to, to talk with kings and queens of other countries."

"I should hate to be one," said Betty contentedly.

"And, oh, so romantic!" Jean gave a great sigh. "It was in this very palace that the Queen saw the one she was going to marry. Her mother gave a ball, and the young Prince Albert was there, and he danced with the Princess, who was just seventeen. Imagine, Betty! Oh, if I only

knew which room it was in! He went home and wrote in his diary, 'Our cousin is very amiable,' and *I* believe that meant he had fallen in love with her already!

"Another thing that happened at Kensington Palace was the grandest birthday party you ever heard of, when the Princess was eighteen. They woke her in the morning with a serenade, and they kept celebrating all day long, and she had presents and presents, and all the English people had a holiday.

"That was the end of her being a little girl," said Jean, "and so it's the end of my story."

VI

THE ARTS AND CRAFTS OF JEAN

HOW it rained that Saturday afternoon! Jean watched it from the library window: "When it gets to the sidewalk, it jumps up again, and makes thousands and millions of fairy fountains. Oh, see it!" By-and-by she turned away, and gave a big, contented sigh. "Oh, I like it when it rains; it makes it so nice indoors."

Ever since the aunts had taken her to an Arts and Crafts Exhibition in the city, Jean had wanted to set up arts and crafts of her own. A rainy day was the very time for them.

She had been busy thinking. "They are n't going to be presents. I shall have a Bazaar in the big bay window. It will be a Benefit, and the money will be for the Crippled Children."

"The Home" was much talked about in Jean's family, for her mother was on the Board, and all the others did their part to help the little cripples.

The enterprise begun on that rainy day took all the rainy days for a year, and some bright

days, besides; for, though the family had begged that they might help, Jean was bent on having the affair her own entirely. She took a violent fancy first to one craft and then to another. At first, it was the making of "pretty boxes." Her mother's store of paper boxes, little and big, was called on. Charming pictures, from papers and magazines, were pasted on the lids, or a flower from a lovely wall-paper. Jean learned to finish the sides neatly with a tinted paper, and to line the inside with fresh white. She could even cover a bandbox so that you might fancy you were putting away your hat in a bower of roses.

Jean was fired by her young aunts. "Everything you use should be beautiful," they said, "everything you handle or see. It is sinful not to have it." They made quotations from Ruskin that bewildered Jean. One day they talked about a man named William Morris. He had said that if a family could do but one thing to beautify their home, the best would be to make a bonfire of two thirds its contents. Not a thing she made for her Bazaar should deserve that bonfire, Jean determined.

"I give you a motto for your arts and crafts,"

said Aunt Rosalie: “‘utile dulce,’ ‘useful and pretty.’” For in spite of her, the aunts would help. “Here are six kitchen holders. You shall make a star in the middle of each with red embroidery cotton. That will be Decorative Art, and besides, it will keep the holder firm. And here are six dish-towels, and you shall work a blue number in the corner of each. How are the picture-books getting on?”

Jean’s picture-books were an important branch of her enterprise. Into a dozen small scrap-books and two or three books of cloth, she pasted cut-out pictures which she and her friends collected.

“Oh, save me all the little princes and princesses, and I’ll make one book of them.” “Little Royalties,” they named it. Another book was “Beautiful Ladies.” One was the “Funny Book,” and her father was the best contributor to that.

“Are n’t you going to have a ‘Book of Authors’ — you are so fond of authors, Jean? You can have authors sitting in their libraries, and authors on their doorsteps, and authors in their gardens, — they seem to have the best time of any of us.”

"I know somebody that wants to buy your 'Little Royalties,'" said Aunt Dorothy.

"I guess who!" cried Jean. "I know his name! It begins with a 'D' and ends with a 'R'!"

"While you are clipping, don't skip the advertising pages," her father advised. "Make a 'Book of Inventions.' Be sure you give every picture its name. These are 'General Intelligence Books,' this series."

"That niece of mine," said Aunt Dorothy to a young man named Dunbar, — "that child has made a dozen of her books, and has actually pasted the pictures in straight. Deft little fingers, Jean has. Now she is all for decorating flower-pots — something more or less Cubist that she learned at school. Mind you buy one."

There must be a department of bags in this pocketless age, said the aunts. They considered how they could aid in this important matter.

"You all help me too much," Jean protested, and the aunts had to be contented with merely superintending a set of pretty bags for travelling, for comb and brush and all the rest. There was

a work-bag with "cubby-holes," and a flat, stiff bag for writing materials. Great-Aunt Nancy sent a big black silk bag, which Aunt Rosalie named "the carry-all."

"You've helped me a great deal," said Jean, "but I suppose I could n't do much without aunts."

"Oh, you darling!" cried the aunts.

"Anyway, thank you very *much*."

"You are the organizer. You took the initiative," said Aunt Rosalie. Jean's face shone at these handsome large words. "You shall have all the glory. Wait till we have our Pageant. Then we shall let you help."

Miss Nixon, the dressmaker, had difficulty in getting Jean to "try on" when Bazaar preparations were at their height.

"I'm fond of children," Miss Nixon was saying one day, "but I must say I have my choice among 'em. I prefer, myself, a child that's been taught some manners — all which I mean for a compliment for you, Mis' McGill."

"I'm sure I'm much obliged, Miss Nixon. I think Jean is too busy with her Bazaar. The weather is settled, and she ought to be more

out-of-doors. Arts and crafts will do for bad weather."

"There's arts and crafts, as you call 'em, of a new sort now," said Miss Nixon, "what with all this hospital work. There's even a Little Girls' League, they say."

The Bazaar took place in the great bay window that made one end of the library.

The invitation had read, "Friends of the Crippled Children are invited to buy utile dulce things at 84 Elm Street, Wednesday afternoon."

All Jean's relatives were present, even Grandma Wilkins in her wheeled chair. A number of the neighbors were there, not to mention several young men, who had come at a word from the aunts. These proved to be rather embarrassing customers, for one youth bought up Aunt Rosalie's entire contribution of divinity fudge, and another said he would have taken a peck of those peanut macaroons.

"You should n't have allowed it, Jean. That is n't the way business is done," said Aunt Rosalie.

The holders and dust-cloths and dish-towels went off very well; boxes were popular; and

the picture-books were a great success. Only the Cubist flower-pots went a little slowly.

"I am holding you back," Aunt Dorothy whispered to the young man at her side. "I am keeping you for the left-overs. You *will* oblige me by buying a flower-pot?"

"My arts and crafts are over," said the tired, happy Jean that night. "I wonder what I shall do next. I know! Mamma, can't I please join the Little Girls' League?"

So Jean's gay little arts and crafts with their bright wools and ribbons were set aside for arts and crafts of a graver sort. She folded bits of gauze, snipped cloth for pillows, and learned soon to knit.

She set about it at first very soberly and tenderly, she and Betty Lee. Yet Jean saw no battle-fields or beds of wounded men, as the older women did, while they rolled their bandages. To Jean the little pads of soft white gauze looked only very neat and pretty, as she patted them into shape. With Betty Lee beside her, she was soon gay and laughing.

"Hear those children," said the ladies, — "how little they realize!"

“I’d lots rather do this than make ribbon bags,” said Jean with all her heart. “I’m going to make a comfort bag. My grandma made one in the Civil War. Did *your* grandma?”

VII

A SURPRISE PARTY

THAT birthday party of Betty Lee's nearly *killed* her mother," was what Jean overheard. "She was ill for a week."

And Jean herself had had such a grand time at that very party! It had been apple-blossom season, and the Lees' house had been decorated all up and down with branches of apple-blossoms; the refreshments were every kind of sandwich and every kind of cake you can think of; and not only Betty had a pink birthday gown, but her two little sisters, so that they looked like apple-blossoms themselves. "It was perfectly lovely; and yet Mrs. Lee was nearly dead the next day," the aunts reported.

Jean's own birthday was soon to come off, and she did some thinking. "You need n't have any birthday party for me," was her conclusion. "I don't think much of birthday parties after you are eleven years old."

"You would rather have some other kind of

treat? Tell me what you would like,” said Jean’s mother. “Let me see — it will be May twenty-ninth, the very date of the National Conference. I did want to go into town for that. We might have your Celebration on another day, as queens often do.”

Nothing sounds more imposing than a National Conference, and it is not much wonder that Jean’s little birthday gave way before it. It was agreed that the following Saturday should be spent in the city with the aunts as hilariously as could be contrived. Mrs. McGill arranged gaily over the telephone to go to the National Conference with a fellow club-woman, and Jean, it must be confessed, looked forward to her birthday rather dolefully. There would be presents, no doubt, in the morning, but her father and mother would be gone all day, and there would be school as usual. The only comfort was that if her mother were “dead” next day, it would be the Conference and not the Birthday that had done it. Her mother would never, never know the real reason why Jean had given up her party, and that, somehow, was a dreary thought.

But Jean McGill was not the girl to sit down

and mope. "I'll *have* a party! And she shall never know, and never have the least bit of trouble about it! It will be all over before she gets home from the National Conference."

Jean was happy again. She did not stop to think whether it was quite the thing to help herself to nine of her mother's correspondence cards and to write with her mother's pen, which was not allowed to be touched. The cards read:—

Jean McGill at home, May 29
Refreshments about half-past two
Grown-up Dress Music and Dancing

On the back of the cards was added:—

*Every guest is requested to do up her hair as high
as it will go, and wear one of her mother's long skirts.*

"They can wear whatever else they please," said Jean; "but hair done up and long skirts are *de riggle*."

The nine cards were sent, or rather left in desks at school, for why waste money on postage stamps when every penny was needed for peanuts?

Jean next studied her own dress. She knew that hostesses wore pretty gowns and stood up to "receive." Jean faced a very good-sized

temptation, to borrow a lovely new gown of her mother's. It was rather too short, to be sure, and made her mother look like a little girl herself, but all the dearer and prettier for that! That last thought settled the matter. Never could she take her mother's gown, her mother was so *dear*! She must come honestly by her grown-up dress, and she went squarely about it thus: "Aunt Rosalie, Aunt Dorothy, would you let me take your third-best party dress for three hours and a half some day, and not ask one single question?"

"With the greatest possible pleasure, you dear child," both aunts answered at once. "But what in the world—no, we won't ask. What color will you have?"

"I should *like* the lacy one with blue ribbons."

"Shall we put some tucks in the skirt?"

"Please don't ask any questions. Thank you very *much*."

"Mysteries! I love a mystery," said Aunt Rosalie, and went off to play tennis. "Dorothy, come along, let's mind our own business."

Jean next considered refreshments: peanuts and water, and there would be sure to be candy for her birthday. Her mother had said there

would be no cake with candles; it should all be put into the hilarious Saturday. But there was a bakery window in Longwood that Jean loved only a little less than the window of the Little Shop. There, she knew, was a big round coffee-cake, with nuts inside and out. That should be her birthday cake, a cake quite within her means. These refreshments should be set out on the dining-room table, and all swept away before her mother's return on the six o'clock train.

The birthday arrived, and there were kisses and candy, and hugs from her father and mother when they went off on the train together. "My darling, how can I leave you? I'm sorry I promised to be there." Jean encouraged her mother to go, however.

At two o'clock Jean stood with a hand-glass before the long mirror and smiled at herself first this way and then that. She stepped off to get a good view of her train. Aunt Rosalie was tall, and her gown when worn by her little niece trailed like an "old-fashioned lady's." Jean's top-knot had been a long labor, but the result was satisfactory. If anybody at this moment had called Jean a plain child, he would have made

a mistake. She looked as pretty as Cinderella at the ball!

She took her place under the chandelier, ready to "receive."

"Come right in and leave your things in the other room," the hostess shouted, standing "at attention."

"We had to wear rain-coats over us, we looked so funny," the guests explained.

"I should think you did," said their elegant hostess. "I'm receiving. You must come and speak to me here. Well, Betty Lee, I never did!"

Betty Lee was speechless with embarrassment, for her hair was done in puffs, with a ringlet behind each ear. Her mother had labored all day over her toilette, and had turned her out a charming little Victorian lady.

Fanny Squires had put on the dress of a rather stout mamma, which she had filled out at the waist-line till Fanny was as broad as she was long.

"Why, Sarah Baker," cried Jean, "you are just like your aunt when she goes to church in her plum-colored dress. And here come Annie and May and Alice and Polly all in a bunch."

One little girl had her hair powdered and wore

a cap, which made them dance around her and call her Grandma. Another wore her grandmother's black silk, and having short hair of her own, fastened on a "waterfall," which fell off from time to time, and made the more fun.

The oddest little figure was a young miss in her mother's street suit, with the coat belted in, and a severe hat set on her curly locks.

Every one had a dress that dragged — that was "*de riggle*"! Feeling the skirt draw behind her, lifting it with one hand, stepping with it around her ankles, even tripping over it, — ah, what delight could equal that! Only the exquisite pleasure of studying their done-up hair in every mirror, tossing their heads with all the airs and graces they could put on.

Having got everybody thoroughly "received," which included admiring one another's costumes, Jean invited her guests to be seated. The little girls took their seats stiffly, on the edge of Mrs. McGill's best chairs. They had been accustomed to pay their visits to Jean in the tree house, or in the attic, as the weather determined.

"Now, you must all talk according to who you are." This put a damper on conversation. The

dull ones felt duller than ever, and nearly all were speechless with giggles. Jean, as hostess, administered another shake to her guests. "Each just pretend she is her own mother. That's easy enough." Jean tried to make some care-worn wrinkles in her brow. "I have a daughter that is a probble-em. I never know what she'll do next. How do you manage daughters, Mrs. Baker?"

"You said I looked like my aunt," said Sarah. "I know how to manage nieces. It's my aunt that attends to my manners."

"My daughter Betty" (Betty Lee thought this such a huge joke that she nearly choked) "follows round after that wild Jean McGill, and they are into everything, almost. I *try* to teach my daughter how to behave!"

"Well, I like that!" said Jean, but concluded to laugh. "As if we did n't — generally."

"Children are a great care," croaked the old lady in the cap.

"Now, let's dance," said Jean. "Turn on the victrola and dance!"

And how they danced — the little "grown-ups"! — laughed themselves out of breath,

tumbled their hair down, stepped on their trains, and fell in a heap on the floor!

Jean made no more attempts at conversation. "Let's pile out to the dining-room."

"*Now! Look at that!*" said Jean triumphantly, as she led out her guests.

The table was trimmed with yellow blossoms from the shrub under the window. The huge, nutty coffee-cake with its yellow wreath had the place of honor. Small glass dishes of candies balanced dishes of peanuts, and a crowd of shining tumblers with a big tinkling pitcher provided for the thirsty. "I knew you'd all *be* thirsty," the hostess remarked.

"There!" she continued; "there is a birthday party for about a dollar, and without making your mother a bit of trouble. Your party was another kind that was perfectly lovely, Betty Lee, and we all enjoyed it very *much*. Now, everybody begin to eat. Oh, I'm so thirsty! Why, this water is n't water—it's lemonade! I never would have believed that of Frieda. Frieda *has* got a heart. And I told her we did n't want her this afternoon, besides. There's more lemonade in the pantry, and I'll just tell you, too, there's

another coffee-cake, only it did n't look quite so elegant to put two on the table together. You'd better sit up round the table; it's safer for clothes, 'specially borrowed ones.'

There was quiet when the coffee-cake first went round, accompanied by lemonade. Nobody looked up towards the doorway; nobody heard a sound. But there stood Jean's mother, and the clock was striking four!

The afternoon speeches at the National Conference had been rather dull and drowsy, and Mrs. McGill's thoughts had been all on her little Jean's birthday. She had looked at her watch, and had caught the three-twenty train. As she entered her house she heard merry sounds from the dining-room, and then a long silence. What could this mean? She dropped her gloves and shopping-bag, leaving Aunt Rosalie standing in the hall, and made all haste to the dining-room. No wonder she stopped short at the threshold, and threw up her hands, to see her dining-table surrounded by quaint little "grown-ups," each with the expression on her face of a kitten caught at the cream.

"I call this a very successful surprise party,"

said Mrs. McGill, trying to be stern. "I was never *more* surprised in my life."

"Oh, Mother, don't you *see*?" Mrs. McGill secretly thought that Jean in Aunt Rosalie's gown was irresistible, but she felt it necessary to inquire what this was all about.

"Oh, Mother, don't you *see*? It was going to be all over before you got here, and everything cleared away, and not make you any trouble."

All that Mrs. McGill answered was: "Rosalie, see if you can find my camera, quick! Don't one of you children stir!"

VIII

THE ABBESS HILDA'S PUPIL

THE united College Clubs of all the Longwoods were to give a Pageant in the open-air theatre of the Longwood Country Club. It was to be in honor of Learning, and more especially in praise of Learning for women. Jean listened to this explanation, and thought it rather a dull business. Yet she always listened when the aunts spoke.

Aunt Rosalie read off grandly, "Athena, goddess of Learning, is going to reveal, through lives of learned women, the intellectual progress of womankind. Tell me, Jean, what do you make of that?"

Jean made not much, but listened hard.

"Hear the rest: —

"'All those who come' (that's you, Jean)
'Shall pause before this fabric, ages old,
Shaped by past lives in symmetry and truth,
And glorying in design so well begun,
Themselves shall add thereto.' (That is you, Jean.)
'And this my web
Shall weaving be forever, never done.'"

Jean had a faint glimmering of what this meant.

"Then come the scenes of the wonderful women. First there is Sappho and poetry and singing and dancing. Then there is a Roman scene: Hortensia pleading in the Forum that unjust taxes shall not be levied on the women of Rome. 'T was all really so, right out of the histories. And then Hilda, who was Abbess of Whitby. And there is where you come in, dear child."

At that, be sure, Jean listened.

"Do you know what an abbess is?"

"Head lady in a convent," Jean could hardly get it said fast enough.

"This was a great convent at Whitby, in the north of England, by the sea. It was really two, a monastery for men and a convent for women, and the head of the women was the Lady Hilda, and this is the way the old history book tells about her — hear these words, Jean: —

"This handmaid of Christ, the Abbess Hilda, whom all that knew her called Mother, for her singular piety and grace, was not only an example of good life to those who lived in her monastery, but afforded occasions of amendment and salvation to many who lived at a distance, to whom the blessed fame was brought of her industry and virtue."

Jean listening, looked happy, for she always liked a book better if it was not in every-day language.

“You see people came to consult her, she was such a wise woman — kings and abbots and poets, even. There was a gleeman —”

“Oh, I know what a gleeman was!” Jean interrupted. “I wish we had gleemen.”

“— Named Cædmon, and there is a story about him and you can read it. But it is n’t the story I am telling now. This Cædmon turned from making vain songs to composing hymns and tales of heavenly things. For the Abbess Hilda’s pleasure and also that he might be taught by her — for he was a poor, ignorant cowherd of the monastery — he came to learn of her and to sing to her and to her nuns. Your Aunt Dorothy is going to be Cædmon.”

“All dressed up like a monk?”

“And I am to be King Oswy of Northumbria.”

“Dressed up like a king?”

“To be sure, with a crown on my head, and a gorgeous robe made out of some old portières — gold fleurs-de-lis all over them. Never mind if Oswy *is* an old Saxon.”

"Now, the Abbess Hilda is sitting in her cloister with her nuns," Aunt Rosalie continued sociably, "and they are embroidering all sorts of beautiful things for the church. First there comes an old abbot to ask her advice; 'for many sought her wisdom,'" said Aunt Rosalie, in the language that Jean liked. The child's face brightened and softened when the words grew poetic.

"You see Hilda was highly educated, but wise besides. She probably liked to study and learn when she was a little girl. I'm quite *sure* she did."

"Did she like sitting still in school and looking straight at a book?"

"Anyway, Hilda loved learning, and made other people like it. She would n't let them go out of her convent till they did. 'They must have that passion in their heart,' she said; 'they must show the joy that books and learning bring to the heart of man.' Now, *that's* a teacher! I'm glad I've known a few such."

"Aunt Rosalie, could the Abbess Hilda teach abbots and kings and grown-up people?"

"They came and asked her advice. This King Oswy — that I am, you know — came to place his little daughter Ælfæda in her care, to be

educated and made a nun. You see Oswy — I — had won a great victory over the heathen, and he and I had vowed gifts to the monastery of Whitby, if we should win the battle, and had promised to give our only daughter to the service of God. And so I bring the little girl to Hilda to bring up. I lead her to the Abbess, and I say, 'Here, in these cloisters, O Hilda, we wish her to abide, and to grow like thee, in holiness, steadfastness, and virtue.' And Jean, dear, we want you to be the little Saxon princess!"

"With a crown on my head?"

"Yes, a sweet little coronet, and a white gown with gold embroidery, and a sky-blue mantle, all as Saxon as can be. You don't have to say a word — little girls did n't then. You are just led in and left — little girls were, in those days."

"I'm glad it's now. I'm always glad it's now!"

"So am I, upon my word," said Aunt Rosalie.

"You'd love to be Ælflæda, would n't you?"

"Oh, yes!" said Jean rapturously.

"Aunt Dorothy and I have to make your costume."

"Oh, can't I sew on the Pageant, too? And can't Betty Lee be in the Pageant, too?"

THE ABBESS HILDA'S PUPIL 71

"We can tuck her in somewhere. There are to be three hundred and fifty. Betty can't be a princess, though."

"King Oswy might lead two young daughters to the Abbess Hilda," Jean suggested, in Pageant language.

"Jean, that would be bad art," laughed Aunt Rosalie. "See if you know what that means."

Then came busy weeks. Jean's mother, though a member of the College Club, took no part in the Pageant. She was too busy with War Relief, she said, in this second summer of the War. Moreover, she had no heart for it. Her young sisters argued: "But the world has to go on. Art and Education must go on. The Pageant is for High-School scholarships, and we do hope it is going to be a work of art."

"Don't work yourselves to death over it, you children," said the elder sister.

From Jean they got more sympathy. She tagged after her aunts when they went to rehearsals, and soon had her favorites among the characters of the Pageant. There was Marie de France, who recited one of her lays before the Court of Henry I of England. Jean had never

heard of her before, but made inquiries and set her down as worth knowing. Marie's lay was recited in pretty old language that went with her charming gown. The Court ladies, with their romantic finery and graceful dances, delighted Jean; for at last they had come to the dress rehearsal, and the little Saxon princess was permitted to wear her crown and sky-blue mantle.

She was quite carried away with the splendid Isabella d'Este, who held a golden fête in the gardens of her Italian villa. Jean saw great artists bring gifts to the lady. Music and poetry and painting all paid her homage, because Isabella d'Este had gifts of mind as well as of fortune. She understood and appreciated and encouraged, and was a friend to artists and poets.

Lady Jane Grey was the first old acquaintance whom Jean recognized in the Pageant. The little girl sat entranced as she saw lords and ladies gather for this next scene. They were all in bright riding-dress, and their horses in gay trappings, led in by grooms. The company mounted and rode away to the hunt, rode off across the bridge, and beyond the lake, and along the hillside, till they disappeared at a far-

away turn of the road. Jean gave one of her great sighs of satisfaction, "Oh, it's just ezackly like Sir Walter Scott!"

Young Lady Jane, however, had refused to go to the hunt; she begged to remain at home with her book and her tutor Roger Ascham — strange choice, thought Jean. Yet, a new impression was made upon her mind, when she saw that Learning could charm and hold a young maid so. The studious lady "found freedom and delight" in study, a quite new idea to Jean. To sit with book in a stately garden, to be dressed like one of Shakespeare's heroines, and to have a tutor clad in rich black velvet — this might make romance of education, even.

In one more scene Jean saw Learning honored, when, in the seventeenth century, the fair Elena Cornaro was given a degree at the University of Padua. A wreath of laurel was placed upon her head, an ermine cape was laid on her shoulders, and a ring slipped upon her finger — all because she had studied well and grown wise as she was beautiful. The procession of learned doctors and the bands of happy students, and in the midst of them the noble Elena, made a picture that fired

the heart of little Jean with she knew not what ambition. She waited breathless for the last scene of all. Athena once more appeared, and "bade her growing web of Learning reveal its pattern" continuously before her. In one long procession the people of the Pageant moved past the goddess. As the singing of the Italian students died away, a faint echo of their song came from the hill across the glen. Athena summoned these new singers, and they streamed down the hillside, and across the grassy stage, — the school-girls of Longwood, — singing on their way, "for Athena's web shall weaving be forever, never done."

Next day came the public performance of the Pageant, and Jean was obliged to give her whole attention to being a little Saxon princess. "You must remember that you are out of sight, behind the scenes, except those few minutes you are on the stage. We Saxons have the garage for our dressing-room."

It was no great fun, when so much was going on outside, to sit still, and watch the flies on the dusty window of the garage. Jean heard sounds of music and loud clapping of hands.

One by one, the Saxons gathered. There

THE ABBESS HILDA'S PUPIL 75

seemed nothing left of Aunt Rosalie but her voice, so completely was she transformed into the bearded, crowned, and richly robed King Oswy. Jean was rather afraid of her and held back shyly. The lovely and lively Abbess Hilda had been her admiration from the first. As the garage grew hotter and hotter with the afternoon sun beating upon the roof, it was the Abbess Hilda's jokes that kept them all good-natured. It was wonderful how sweet and solemn she could look the next minute. She was Aunt Rosalie's classmate, and she made much of Jean, her "little pupil."

"I wish you were my teacher," said Jean softly. "I'd like you for a real teacher."

"Come, girls, you're wanted!" called the stage messenger.

That was a great moment when Jean put her hand into that of King Oswy, — once her Aunt Rosalie, — and looked up to a bearded face and crowned head. More than any other person present did our Jean believe that it was really a king she walked beside, and that she herself was truly a princess. She stepped proud and happy, and listened devoutly as the king knelt with her

before the holy abbess. His glittering warriors stood beside him, and Hilda's nuns were grouped about her. The Abbess bowed her head, and her lips moved silently. All stood still in the quiet sunshine, and an awe fell upon the place. The audience was hushed, and the heart of little Jean was strangely moved.

Then rose the king and addressed the Abbess Hilda: "Most Gracious Mother, through our Saviour's grace we have won the country from the heathen. In thanks thereof now give we to the service of the Most High our only daughter Ælflæda. Here, in these cloisters, O Hilda, we wish her to abide, and to grow like thee in holiness, steadfastness, and virtue."

When King Oswy placed the little hand in Hilda's, and the tall and gracious lady drew Jean to her, with a loving smile, the child had an impassioned moment of ardor for learning and for holiness that went to the making of the Jean of future years. Her heart rose high, as Hilda in noble words accepted the trust and gave the king her blessing as he departed. Then Hilda took the hand of the little maiden and the two together led the procession of the nuns, while the vesper

THE ABBESS HILDA'S PUPIL 77

bells rang softly, and the women sang a sweet and solemn chant. The band of nuns went slowly away among the trees, and Jean walked in a dream, in which she could scarce have told whether she was her real self, or that young Ælfæda, given to lead her life in the green cloister, and finally to become herself the Abbess, "lady of virtue and of learning."

Next day, the talk of the family was of nothing but the Pageant. "I liked the Abbess Hilda best of all," said Mrs. McGill. "I suppose it was the way she looked at my little Jean."

Jean's own remark was, "I *think* I shall go to college."

IX

THAT AWKWARD BOY

THE young aunts in their fresh spring gowns had been to call on the "new family," the Cheevers, but had first dropped in to see their Grandma Wilkins. She had told them that they looked as pretty as a picture, and had added that they must not think too much of clothes. It was the sisters' custom, when out calling, to begin with their grandmother and to end with Mrs. McGill, to whom they gave a confidential report of the afternoon. Jean ran to open the door for her aunts.

"Of all awkward boys, that Cheever boy is certainly the worst! He was caught in the room when we came in — mending a window fastening, I believe, and there we were, before his mother could get to us. First, he pretended he did n't see us, then he gave one glare at Rosalie, and turned his back squarely upon us."

"I spoke," said Dorothy, "because I thought

I was less formidable than Rosalie. The boy mumbled something without turning, and pretended to be busy with his window. His mother came smiling in, and tried to shake him into his manners, by introducing him to us — miserable boy! When he got outside the door, I caught him looking back, at Rosalie!”

“Poor boy!” laughed Mrs. McGill. “He has to pass our house a number of times a day, and he always behaves as if he were afraid somebody on the veranda would speak to him. I bow to him once a day, that he may have the practice. He gives a ghastly smile, but he does lift his hat properly.”

“Well,” said Mr. McGill, when he heard this story, “I have some respect for a boy that mows the lawn, as that chap does. Pity Jean wa’n’t a boy — then I could lay off now and then. I toil for my family in the city all day, and then come home and have to be gardener, carpenter, furnaceman, and lately I’m chauffeur. That’s your poor father.”

Jean looked at him, full of compassion. “I can mow the lawn. I did one day, but Mamma would n’t let me.”

"I've some respect for a boy that's got some summer work, and does n't loaf through his High-School vacation."

"He's Betty Lee's cousin," said Jean. "That's the reason they came here to live, because they had relations."

"His mother says he has just joined the Boy Scouts," Mrs. McGill told them. "She hopes that will help to bring him out."

Rosalie laughed heartlessly. "Fancy that boy doing chivalrous deeds — rescuing distressed damsels — would n't he be the sufferer?"

"Think of his performing a kindly act once a day," Dorothy giggled. "What agony, 'to practice courtesy'!"

"Come, now, you women, let the boy alone," said Mr. McGill. "He does n't want to be looked at, that's all. Don't, for Heaven's sake, study him!"

Jean spoke up. "He talks to Betty and me, because we're only kiddies. He is n't impolite to us, not very."

"That's right, Jean."

And then they all forgot about the awkward boy.

Jean's mother came home one day and found her daughter standing barefoot on the veranda roof, and, turning the garden hose upon the second-story windows.

"*Jean!*" cried her mother.

"They needed it," was all Jean said.

"Don't you *ever* do such a thing again *as long as you live!*"

"I took off my shoes and stockings," said the young lady, looking down at her wet, pink toes.

"Don't you ever do it again unless you want to be punished."

"No'm," said Jean willingly. Doing it once was the adventure.

"I must talk to you seriously. How am I ever to trust you? There is just one little sentence to say before you do a thing you never did before — 'Would my mother like to have me?'"

"I did n't go up on the roof when Leonard was putting up his wireless, Betty and I did n't," said Jean with a great air of virtue. "I knew you would n't like it."

"On the roof of the house? I should think not. There is a difference between being brave

and being foolhardy. Tell me what 'foolhardy' means."

"Bein' a goose to show you're brave," answered Jean promptly.

"You will have enough chances to be brave without doing silly things like clambering about on roofs."

Jean put on her shoes and stockings and went off to find Betty. She discovered her sitting in the shrubbery that bordered the Cheevers' lawn, and watching Leonard mow the grass. The two little girls hung about, teasing him to let them push the lawn-mower. Betty offered him pay if he would.

"No, you don't," said Leonard; "it's no job for girls. Hands off!" He had stopped to fan himself with his hat.

"Do you get paid?" asked Betty, as she was his cousin.

"I'm the head man on this place," Leonard answered.

Jean became thoughtful. She was calculating that, what with Christmas and birthdays, she had now in hand seven dollars and thirty-five cents. Jean was thrifty. A child without a sav-

ings-bank did not stand well among little folks, according to Jean.

After some hard thinking, she had made up her mind. She said very politely to Leonard, "Do you have time to mow any more lawns?"

"Well, that depends," said Leonard, trying to speak like his father. "Is it a business proposition?"

"How much do you charge a time?" asked Jean prudently.

"Show me your lawn and I can tell you better."

"Our lawn. It needs it now, and my father says he has the hardest time of any man he knows. He says that every time he mows the lawn. Could you mow it before he gets home to-night and s'prise him? I'd like to treat him to a lawn-mowing. I've got plenty of money."

Leonard was glad of the job, but he pretended to be a little sulky about it, and said he could n't do it for less than thirty cents, as big a lawn as that.

"I think that's cheap," said Jean. "It will be such fun when he comes home and does n't know what has happened to the lawn."

It *was* fun, for never was man more surprised. Moreover, Jean's father said it was a capital

idea, and he'd engage the young man for the rest of the season.

"How much did you pay him, my girl? I'll hand over the cash."

"No," said Jean; "you can pay the rest of the times, but this was my treat. It was because you had such a hard time." Jean's voice was tearful, and she hid her face against her father.

"My little daughter!"

Though it pained Leonard to speak to any one when he came to do his work, and though he contrived ingenious ways not to see the family, he appeared regularly from this time on, and Mr. McGill began to take pride in his lawn.

Since Leonard refused all assistance, Jean and Betty sought other diversions. Back of the garden was a vacant lot, with possibilities. Unimproved property was a nuisance, said older people: Mrs. McGill declared that the Woman's Club ought to take up the subject. But to the children vacant lots were whole countries, good as any on the maps. "Now we are in the depths of the forest," said Jean to Betty, as they pushed their way through the tall prairie grass, high as their heads.

When they had come out of the jungle of weeds, said Jean, "Let's crouch down here, and watch the little aviators."

"That's what *you* call those flies with the gauze wings flying up and down in the sunshine. I call them flies."

"They do ezactly like the aviators at the Flying Park. They're fairy aviators, don't you see? Oh, watch!"

The finest entertainment the vacant lot afforded was when a neighbor made a bonfire there. This happened frequently in the autumn when the leaves began to fall.

One bright October day, somebody had collected choice materials for a bonfire in the lot at the back of the McGill garden. There were barrels of dead leaves, dry twigs and branches, and bundles of old papers. Jean watched them accumulating, and was on the lookout for some fun. The neighbor touched off his heap of rubbish, and the fire kindled merrily. So long as the old gentleman stayed by, Jean stood at a respectful distance. Presently he went back to his cellar for more rubbish, and she drew nearer the bonfire. There was nothing, she thought, so

beautiful, so interesting, as a dancing flame — you could hardly believe it was n't alive! In the library fireplace, it fascinated Jean, who quite forgot to read when she sat before it with a book. But a fireplace was a tame thing compared with a bonfire.

Jean capered around the burning heap of brush and leaves. She loved to see the fire reach after a dry branch, curl about it, and wrap it all in brightness. Jean held out a brown twig towards the flame to tempt it, and stole a little nearer and a little nearer, though well she knew this was the forbidden "playing with fire." The tip of the twig grew red, and the red crept down, farther and farther, then suddenly blazed into a bold flame. The flame darted out like a tongue and curled around Jean's sleeve — and oh! Jean never knew *what* happened, only that something was horribly hot and smelled of scorching, and she herself was screaming for her life!

There was a shout from the back of her garden, where Leonard was putting away the lawn-mower in the tool-house.

"Lie down, you little fool!" Leonard roared at her. "Lie down on the ground and *roll*, I tell you!"

He was there in an instant, and was roughly rolling Jean in the stubby grass. She had to be carried into the house, her arm hurting so that tears ran without a sound — the worst kind of tears, she told Betty Lee. Jean was put to bed and the doctor sent for.

Leonard was obliged to be thanked, but he got away as soon as he could, for his face had grown very white. He knew "first-aid," and tried to apply it to his own hands. It was no use — he had to call on his mother, and own up to what had happened, which he did in a disgusted, disagreeable way. He quite hurt his mother's feelings, he was so ungrateful for her sympathy.

"Oh, let up on the hero business," he growled. "Don't you go telling people."

Leonard could not mow anybody's lawn for more than a week, and took a back street to avoid passing the McGills' house with bandaged hands. When his mother told her friends of his promotion in the "Boy Scouts," Leonard, I regret to say, would not speak to her through a meal-time.

As for Jean, she was soon up and about again,

but her pride did not recover. In fact, she was much ashamed of her adventure, and tried hard to avoid her rescuer.

“He called me a little f-fool,” she faltered.

“That was about it,” said her father; “he sized you up, did n’t he?”

Jean gave him a look so heart-rending that he drew her close to him, and again thanked God his little girl was safe.

X

SCHOOL, SCHOOL, SCHOOL

JEAN came home one day with a sulky face, and with what was just as bad, a sulky voice. "School, school, school! I'd never go to that old school again if I did n't have to! Recess is the only decent part."

"What is the matter with school?" asked her father. "Give us a few particulars."

"There are brown pinafores," — and Jean made up a face that was not pretty. "There are six reasons why I don't like brown pinafores. They are ugly, and they make us look all alike, and they make us look homely, too. We're the only class that have to wear them, because we're the youngest, and the old girls laugh at us. The visitors say we look 'quaint' — I heard one. She stood and watched us at recess and laughed worse than anybody."

"Six reasons," said Mr. McGill. "Any more?"

"And when you look so alike, you can't ever play half so well you are somebody else."

"I'm afraid that's too subtle for me," laughed Mr. McGill.

"She says they are sanitary. That's a great word she has."

"Don't say 'she': say 'Miss Quackenbush,'" Mrs. McGill corrected her daughter.

This conversation had followed upon Jean's coming home bearing a note from the teacher. She had gone to school in her new pink gingham and had boldly walked to her place without the brown apron.

"Jean, where is your pinafore?"

"In my desk."

"Stand up in the aisle and put it on. Come and see me at recess."

That spoiled her day of school, and though Jean little thought it, the teacher's day was also spoiled by having to discipline a child she wanted to like and whom she yearned to have like her. Pinafores for the youngest class had been the happy or the unhappy thought of an active lady on the School Board, and nobody suffered so much from them as Miss Quackenbush herself.

However, I make no excuses for Jean. She was a disturber of the peace. One sunshiny morning,

Miss Quackenbush was explaining an example in square root, when Jean caught a sunbeam with her prism, and let a bar of green and orange play over the figures on the blackboard.

“Was that you, Jean?”

“I wanted to see if I could make square root look pretty.”

“And you disturbed the class and interrupted the lesson. Bring me your prism.”

Jean dearly loved her prism, and gave it up with a sullen face.

Another day, Jean was sent home with a note to her mother.

“What was it this time, Jean?” said Mrs. McGill, in a discouraged tone.

“I got up and did a dance, when she was out of the room, up one aisle and down another — oh, it was such fun!”

Her mother looked grave. “And made everybody look and laugh and stop her studying. You interrupted the whole school and wasted their time. Miss Quackenbush came back and found the room in complete disorder.”

Jean wondered how her mother knew.

“You have been wasting the taxpayers’

money, that's what it amounts to," said her father.

Jean looked serious at that.

"You are too big a girl for these monkey tricks," said Mr. McGill.

"They treat me as if I was six years old. Treating you the wrong age is what makes folks trouble."

"My advice to you is, learn your lessons rather better than you ever did before, and who knows but they will see you are a case to push ahead. My belief is you don't have half enough to do; you have too much time on your hands. Remember, going to school is your business, just as going to my office is mine. You want to make a good job of it. Brace up, Jean."

"I'm pretty good when I'm at home," said Jean when she was alone with her mother. "And then I change when I get to school."

"What makes you do such things, Jean?"

"I guess it's Satan," said Jean thoughtfully.

"He 'finds some mischief still for idle hands' — and heads."

Jean decided to begin suddenly to be good at school, so good as to puzzle the teacher — that

would be "fun," too. She even tried to "look good." Her notion of this was to sit with hands folded upon her desk like a little saint. Her lips would twitch when she tried to look at Betty Lee out of the corner of her eye.

"Jean, what are you doing?" Miss Quackenbush naturally asked.

"Nothing."

"Have you finished your lessons? Then go to the library and get a book to read. Non-fiction."

Jean came bearing a book of many pictures, about the Cave Men, a subject that fascinated her.

Meanwhile, her mother was giving the subject of school much anxious thought.

"Jean learns her lessons and has fair marks and then seems to have plenty of leisure for mischief. She tucks her books away, and makes a Punch and Judy show out of two handkerchiefs, and gives a performance behind the lid of her desk. Of course, she has to be reproved, and it keeps her perpetually embroiled with the poor teacher. She needs harder work. 'A man's' — or a child's — 'reach should exceed his grasp.'"

"I beg you won't overwork the child," pleaded Grandma.

"Jean is a real little Westerner — she has surplus energy. You will always be Eastern, mother dear. You were never the little girl to take your father's pet atlas and a red pencil and trace the travels of Miss Alcott's 'Shawl-straps' over the map of Europe."

"I'm afraid the child should be punished for that; it was other people's property."

"Her answer was that it made the atlas more interesting — that we hardly ever looked at it till she made journeys in it.

"I wish I knew what to do," Mrs. McGill went on in a worried voice. "Jean's school is somehow a misfit. It is the very thing for Betty Lee, her mother says."

"I realize the difficulties of the teacher," said Jean's grandmother, "with so many little minds, and so short a time for each."

"Oh, so do I, so do I! There is such unevenness among pupils, there has to be more or less teaching down to them. It is a pity. They are growing so fast into little women. That was a wise title Louisa Alcott took for her book.

"When Jean is shut up in the house on a rainy day, her education goes on satisfactorily," her mother continued. "She is driven to read and she is learning how to read. She is the age for Scott and Dickens, and she devours them."

"Do you believe in so much fiction for a child?" asked Grandma, a little anxious.

"It is only by reading fiction, I believe, that a child learns to read so easily and so fast that he really likes it and gets the habit firm and fixed."

Just at this point Jean herself dashed into the room.

"How was school to-day?" asked her mother cheerfully.

"I was good. She seemed to think it was a new kind of naughtiness when I just sat still and did n't do anything."

"I would get a book, if I were you, and see if you can't learn something by yourself, teach yourself something. You often do at home; why not at school?"

"I did: the Cave Men."

It happened that the Principal, a lady tall, erect, and very pleasant to look at, visited Jean's school next day. She made her usual little

speech, this time on Coöperation. She explained that all that large word really meant was "working together."

"What are the things that work together when you go to school? You can begin with the window-boxes and pink geraniums." The pupils were puzzled, but they listened. She looked about the walls of the room. "Those photographs of beautiful pictures and of great buildings and grand mountains, are n't they all working together? and the interesting maps. Now, in 1915, maps are more interesting than they ever were before. Books are coöperating, your textbooks and your beautiful library. This large, bright, airy room does part. Yet, after all, these are not the most important things that coöperate. The schoolroom teaches you beauty, and stirs up your curiosity about no end of things; the flag makes you remember and love your country. I hope I coöperate, I try to; but I am less important than two other coöperators: the teacher is one, the pupil is the other. It takes two to make a bargain; it takes two to make a school. You know what 'team-work' is — ask your fathers, if you don't. Team-work is what we

want here, with every one of you on the team. Team-work is what the whole world needs, and what we are going to have when the Great War is over. Coöperation, a world working together, and here is the place to begin. There, that is all!" With a beautiful smile, that somehow shone into the face of every child, the Principal disappeared.

Improved reports of Jean gave satisfaction at home. Her father, however, being a member of the School Board, observed her carefully.

"We have n't quite hit it yet. We probably shan't till she is older. What Jean has n't got yet is 'interest in her subject.' That takes the great teacher."

"Jean has advanced one stage in her education under Miss Quackenbush. She has grown more womanly and responsible. There are no more 'monkey tricks.' But still she seems to me more intelligent at home than at school. Perhaps that is flattering to her parents, John!"

"It is a serious charge to make to a member of the School Board," said Mr. McGill. "I shall lay it before my colleagues."

"Parents have their school troubles," sighed Mrs. McGill. "I suppose I shall worry through

with Jean's education, and soon will come the great question, is she the kind of girl that it would be wasteful not to send to college?"

"I should let her decide it for herself."

"Last June, when she was in the Pageant, Jean declared she was going to college. I think it was the influence of the Abbess Hilda — that lovely Miss Halleck."

When Mr. McGill returned from the Board meeting he had some news to tell his wife.

"Odd thing that we were talking about Miss Halleck just as I left the house. Miss Quackenbush has resigned because her rich aunt has invited her to go with her to Japan. We have appointed Miss Halleck in her place. She has a fine record."

"Happy Jean!"

XI

JEAN WRITES A TRACT

JEAN made up her mind that she would write a book. Her first resolve was a good one: it should be as small as she could make it. The smallest book she knew of was a tract, therefore she would write a tract. She would have liked to write a long story, or "My Travels in Europe," but a tract had its advantages: it was little and neat and pretty and cheap. Jean had not much money to spend on printing, and she decided that the only book she could afford was a tract.

Her next step was also a right one: to think about her book long and hard.

"You thought I was taking a walk alone, did n't you, Aunt Rosalie? I was n't—I was *thinking!*"

"What a preposterous child!" laughed Aunt Rosalie. "Come along, I'm going to teach you to play tennis, if you're getting so grown-up." Sweetest of all compliments!

To whom should the tract be addressed? A tract was usually addressed to sinners, and Jean knew no real sinners. Yet even grown people needed good advice, and a great deal was given in her own family. Her great-grandmother advised all three generations below her, but nobody gave so much advice as the pretty aunts. She noticed that they always began, "I don't wish to give advice," and then gave it; or, "I don't wish to criticise," and then criticised. Advice to everybody, not merely sinners, appeared to be the fashion nowadays, and especially in the newspapers. A tract for Good People was an idea that attracted Jean. She thought there might be a tract for Parents, but she concluded that such a book from a little girl would not be quite "polite."

Jean had had her experiences of writing. She kept a journal for the simple and satisfactory reason that little Louisa Alcott had kept one. Jean had written compositions that had been selected to be read aloud in school. There was one called "Her Ladyship" which related some of the story that I have told. She rose shyly to read it on Exercise Day, and never once looked up at her hearers. To her confusion she caught

a titter from the older girls, and could hardly finish her reading. "There's such a difference between laughing and laughing at," said poor Jean.

While she kept up her thinking, Jean would sometimes forget the errand that she had been sent on. "It won't do for little girls to be absent-minded and forgetful. You must remember my advice."

In the midst of this speech of her great-grandmother, it flashed upon Jean: "I'll write a tract for myself. Nobody gets so much good advice as I do, and I'll put it in a Collection." Her idea grew. "Some of it I shall make up myself, out of my Conscience. I shall put in texts I like and beautiful quotations, and everything to make me good." Then she laughed to herself: "I do think I'm a funny girl. I guess they'd laugh at school, but if you waited to be laughed at, you'd never do anything!"

Jean's book turned out a unique collection. There were things "made up" and things remembered; there were scraps of poetry and texts of Scripture. The title-page in large printed letters read as follows: —

A Tract for Myself, by a Little Girl

The book itself was like this: —

Wake, and lift up thyself, my heart,
And with the angels bear thy part.

Hymn.

Think of the other person.

Grandma.

You can take any book to read if you wash your hands first.

Mamma.

Put yourself in his place, means dumb animals, too.

Grandma.

Let all things be done decently and in order.

Great-Grandma Wilkins and the Bible.

If you chew gum, people will know what kind of mother
you have.

Mamma.

Anger makes you homely. Look in the glass quick when
you are angry.

Myself.

In honor preferring one another.

Bible.

O, Beautiful! my Country!

Lowell's Poetry.

JEAN WRITES A TRACT 103

Treat everybody well.

William Henry Letters.

Joy cometh in the morning.

Bible.

Speak pleasantly even if you do feel cross, and then you
will get over it.

Mamma.

Little girls should look straight at the one that speaks to
them, and straight at the one they speak to.

The Aunts.

If your hair is perfectly straight, keep saying, "Handsome
is that handsome does."

Myself.

If you were a marble, would n't you want to be a Real and
not an Imi?

Myself.

Pronounce Y-E-S like a lady.

The Aunts.

They helped every one his neighbor: and every one said to
his brother, Be of good courage.

Grandma and the Bible.

Don't scowl, if you want to be good to live with.

Papa.

Don't talk *too* much about your travels when the other per-
son has n't been.

Mamma.

Don't *ever* begin to put on your things till the minister is
all through.

Grandma and Mamma.

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright.

Poetry.

Don't say "Say." *Never* say "Listen."

Mamma.

My own right hand my cup-bearer shall be.

Poetry.

Try not to say "Of course" when you answer people.

The Aunts.

What is that which costs least and is worth most? *Manners!*

Great-Grandma Wilkins.

Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul
from trouble.

Bible.

The King of love my Shepherd is,

Whose goodness faileth never.

Hymn.

This is quite enough to show what Jean's
tract was like.

"I've finished my book," she said. "I can't
think of any more."

"Good place to stop," said her father. "I wish they all would. Who is your publisher?"

"There is n't any yet."

"Has your mother seen it?"

"Yes," said Jean slowly. "Mamma cried when she read it."

"Was the book so bad as that? Let me have a look at it."

"It's copied in a red notebook."

Jean did not take her eyes off her father, and he behaved accordingly. "Oh, Papa, why won't you say something, not just make up faces and look so funny?"

"We'll get this thing printed," said Mr. McGill. "We'll see it through."

Mamma shook her head. "I don't believe in print for a child."

"Just a little tiny book," Jean begged. "That's why I wrote a tract, because it was so small."

"Judd's your man; you take it to Judd. He's got children of his own. You must take the book to him yourself."

"Oh, Papa!" Mrs. McGill and Jean cried together.

"I'll take you round to his office, but you

must transact the business. Take your book along under your arm, and show it to him."

Mr. McGill gave his wife a tremendous look, and still she shook her head.

"In that case, there are one or two, dear, I would leave out. They do not seem quite suited for print."

"Don't you do it," said Papa. "Come into town with me to-morrow. We'll go to the Park and see the other animals after you have bearded the lion in his den."

Jean faced the publisher next morning with the little red book in her hand.

"Come in, come in; sit down, sit down, my little lady. What can I do for you?" said the pleasant Mr. Judd.

"I made up a book, partly out of my own head, partly other people's. It is a tract, so it would be a little paper book without any covers, and I'd *like* it pink."

"You are about the smallest-sized author I've had to deal with. You take to books early. Most little girls would rather roll the hoop."

"Oh, I do, too!" cried Jean. "That's one kind of fun I like." She saw that Mr. Judd was a man you could confide in.

"It's a pretty nice world, now don't you think so?" for he saw Jean to be a person he could himself confide in. "Lots of fun in it, ain't there?"

He took her little red book and turned it over. "I suppose you would want an edition of about a hundred copies."

"Oh, I thought twenty would go round," said this modest author.

"I guess we'd better call it a hundred. We'll send you the proof. Let your mother look it over for you."

"Thank you very *much*," said Jean. She walked away proudly to her father, who was waiting in the corridor. He heard her story, and stepped into a telephone booth, while she looked out of a window and was very, very happy.

"I'm much obliged to you, Judd," said Mr. McGill at the telephone. "Send me the bill. Glad you took to her. Much obliged! Her parents have rather that idea, too! Good-bye."

"Come on, Jean. Now for lunch, and then to the Park. How did you and Mr. Judd get on?"

"He was just like you," said Jean, drawing a little nearer to her father's coat-sleeve.

XII

A SECRET SOCIETY

JEAN MCGILL, Betty Lee, and two other little girls decided that they would have a secret society, and that its object should be to do whatever they liked to do best.

"And meet up in the tree."

"Under the tree," pleaded Fanny Squires, who was timid.

"That would n't be secret enough," the others objected.

"And we are to say truly," Jean went on, "without any pretending, what is the thing we really — hand up your heart — like to do best."

"Eat," said Fanny Squires.

They all laughed at her, but admired her courage. They looked thoughtful.

"I guess I do, too," said Jean, a little reluctantly.

"I know I do," another confessed.

"If it is n't rice pudding, I do," said Betty Lee.

"Let's meet Monday afternoons at the hungriest time," Jean proposed. "But we have n't any name. It must be letters, so as to be secret. But I suppose it is better to have the letters mean something."

The name finally chosen was P.O.R.E. This stood for Party of Ravenous Eaters, though Sarah Baker remarked that it did not sound so very ladylike.

Until Monday, their spare thoughts were given to the collecting of eatables. By the time the four little girls met under the tree, each had acquired a queer-shaped paper package.

There were many adventures before the provisions were safely landed on the platform among the branches. Jean led the way, and tied her parcel around her neck, to leave hands free for climbing. Betty Lee followed the leader. She had planned to draw her box up by a string, which she tied to her wrist. Sarah Baker distributed her food in pockets, pinned up securely. Fanny Squires was the last to quit the ground.

"Betty'll haul you up with her string," shouted Jean derisively.

"It's nothing to climb this tree," said Betty

Lee, standing safe on the platform. "It's all branches."

Miserable Fanny somehow scrambled up, but was sulky at having to pay such a price for her fun.

"There," said Jean, "we are safe from wild beasts up in a tree, just like primitive man."

"I should think we were consid'rably like primitive man," suggested Sarah Baker, who had also read the book about the Cave Men.

"And none of our families can get at us. I have n't a relation that can climb this tree except my father, and he's safe in his office. Now, let's set the table."

Four paper plates were laid on the floor, four paper napkins cocked into a lively shape were placed beside them, and green leaves from the tree were made to serve as "decorations."

"Let's have a *menu*," said Jean, "and eat right through it. I've got a pencil, and here is a paper bag. I'll make four of it, for souvenirs, and we'll put our autographs on the backs, and get them out and look at them when we're old ladies."

"The *idea*!" they all laughed.

“Now, ready, begin!”

“Is that the way you say grace?”

“I should be ashamed to say grace at such a kind of a meal, should n’t you? — to say ‘bless this food to our use’ when it’s very likely to give us a stomach-ache and we know it?” said the sensible Sarah Baker.

They fell upon the first course, which was arranged under the general head, “National Biscuit Company.” The second was named on the *menu*, “Fruits of the Earth”; and the third, the one they longed to reach, was “Patiserie et Confitserie,” spelled uncertainly. This course was sticky and delicious, and had made inroads on their pocket-money.

“I’m perishing for a drink of water!”

“I never was so thirsty in all my life!”

“I shall simply die if I don’t have a drink.”

Hauling water up the tree was pronounced not worth while: “It would be easier to go down and get it and stay down.” So down they went, and hung about a cold-water faucet, till they could drink no more, and could think of nothing else to do but to go home.

The second meeting of the P.O.R.E. was less

fortunate, for a thunderstorm came up in the middle of it, the food was blown away by the wind, and Fanny could with great difficulty be got down to the ground.

At the third meeting, Sarah Baker was absent, being away on a visit, and Sarah was much missed. The fourth meeting dragged, because people had brought only uninteresting crackers and apples, and the P.O.R.E. was getting critical.

It was a few nights later that Jean's father happened to "hold forth," as his wife called it, on the subject of a certain dinner that he had attended. Jean, always listening, was picking up her education.

"Well, it was a great feed, and that is all there is to say. I don't often dine with people who are on that plane, and I'm not a prig, either. Fellows that live to eat — you don't think Hog's a pretty word, I know. Well, I won't say it!"

Jean had some horrified reflections: "people on that plane"; "a great feed"; "fellows that live to eat"; and then, the thought of that last dreadful word! The name of her own society sounded not much better.

The fifth Monday was a day in June, and all

four members of the P.O.R.E. were present. The tree was "soft and whispery"; the air sweet with all kinds of blossoms, and the sky was heaven's own blue. The little girls looked at the group of fat brown paper bags.

Sarah Baker spoke. "It is too bad to do *nothing* but eat such a day as this."

Jean was the next speaker. "I like a secret society, and I like our letters; but we might keep the letters and change the words they stand for."

Said Sarah Baker: "Just for a change, I should like a secret society for the thing that was most different from eating. That's what I think myself, anyway. But what is the thing that's most different from eating?"

They were silent for more than a minute.

"Poetry!" cried Jean. "You could have 'P' stand for Poetry."

There was a long debate, led by Sarah. "The trouble is, the first day of a Club like this is fun, but if it just goes on and on with nothing but eating, it gets just stupid. Look at those paper bags! Now I say, let's have a Poetry Club with refreshments before or after or in between, or all

three, only let's have something besides paper bags of food."

Jean made another speech. "I'm always hungry, but I know very well what people think of people that are on that plane, they think they are just about Primitive Man."

The others were much impressed by "on that plane," and at once decided that they did not want such language applied to them.

"We shall have to reorganize," said Sarah Baker. "You all know what that means, don't you? We shall have to say the object of this Club is the pursuit of Poetry."

Betty Lee gave her opinion. "I like prose best. It's got more sense."

"It depends on what you call sense," Sarah argued.

"Poetry makes you have a different *feeling*," — and Jean made wings with her arms and pretended to soar.

"Have you got to write poetry?" asked Fanny Squires. "Then I shall resign."

"I guess I'd better, too," said Betty Lee.

"It's for the Pursuit of Poetry. You can pursue."

"I like poetry pretty well," said Jean modestly, "but I never could do it myself."

"Poets have to have people like us to read their poetry. Somebody has to be hungry for poetry," reasoned Sarah.

This idea seemed to be quite over the heads of the company, till, after a silence, Jean burst forth, "Party of Ravenous Enjoyers — that's only one word changed."

No, they said, "P" must stand for Poetry. A committee was appointed to fit new words to P.O.R.E., but it has not yet reported to the Club.

"Aunt Rosalie cuts poetry out of the newspapers since the War. Let's do that for the first meeting. And don't get anybody to help us, because we're a secret society still. It's the pursuit of poetry — chasing poetry — like playing a game!"

One day they chased poetry in the "Oxford Book of Verse," another day in Shakespeare.

Little by little grew the desire to put words together in this singing fashion, words a little different from every day, "that made you feel more lifted up and happier somehow." One week

Jean tried to do it, and when it came her turn to read, "Mine's by Anonymous," she said, and read her poem with a trembling voice, and strange to say, with tears at the very last.

"I know who that Anonymous was," said Betty, almost as much moved as Jean herself.

"I never wrote one before," she faltered, "but it was so beautiful in the garden." And that was the only explanation Jean could ever give.

Sarah Baker confessed that she had tried to write a piece, too, and she had the greatest mind to recite it. This she did, in a business-like voice that dried all tears. It was not bad imitation poetry, however, from a writer of thirteen.

"Fanny Squires and I thought we'd make up one together," said Betty. "Each make up a line, then each make up another."

Sarah and Jean listened patiently.

"That's what you would call humorous poetry," Sarah pronounced. "It had splendid rhymes, anyway."

"Let's all make some more, now we've begun," said Jean, much elated.

The end of it all was that poor Fanny Squires found writing or reading a poem even harder

work than climbing a tree and never changed her mind about either; Betty Lee really liked poetry if somebody told her how; Sarah Baker became a good "enjoyer"; and Jean discovered a pleasure to last her to the end of her days.

XIII

LITTLE MOTHER

TO see her mother crying is a distressing sight for any little girl. What could Jean do but creep to her side and pat her softly, and say, oh, so gently, "Don't cry, don't cry, darling 'ittle Mamma, — tell me, tell me!"

Mrs. McGill held a telegram in her hand. "Both are lost, Amy and her splendid husband, and the baby is left here. They were going to her sister who was so ill in England. It is in the evening paper, too."

Then Jean's mother told her of the most pit-eous drowning the world has ever seen.

"Amy left a letter with me when she sailed, a letter to be opened 'if anything happened,'" Mrs. McGill told her husband. "It has 'happened.' Read her letter."

They drew Jean near them, to hear Amy's last message. As much as she understood, she told to Betty Lee next day.

"It was my mother's dearest cousin, like her

very own sister, and she had a little baby, but she did n't take it with her because it was war-time. It was left with two trained nurses. But what the letter said was, if anything happened, my mother was to be the guardian. That means she was to have her, and I was to have her for a little sister. I think that part is perfectly lovely."

"Why, Jean McGill," said Betty, "when it was so dreadful!"

"My mother could n't eat her dinner last night and she hardly slept at all." Jean had a queer little sense of importance, at sharing in the great affliction of her country. "I could n't get to sleep either."

"Tell me more about the baby," said Betty respectfully.

"It is six months old. She is a rich baby — she is an heiress."

"I should n't like to be an heiress because my father and mother were drowned."

"Aunt Rosalie said Mamma might move out of our house and into a bigger one, if she had to spend such an income. She said the baby must expect a good deal. My mother just said, 'Don't speak lightly, Rosalie, my heart is too sore,' —

that is what my mother said. I was thinking myself the baby might want a house a great deal grander than ours, but my mother said it was better for her to be brought up simply, and she should not make any changes in our way of living. This was our home, and we should never love any other place so well. Then my Aunt Rosalie said my mother was n't worldly. What did she mean by that?"

"It's what ministers say all the time you must n't be, and it must be something pretty bad," was Betty's opinion.

"Big houses, I guess," said Jean. "Do you suppose you are worldly, Betty? Your house is ever so much bigger than ours, and a great deal handsomer curtains."

Another conversation was between her father and mother. "If we take dear Amy's baby home, I believe it will be a blessing to Jean. All my little devices for making her unselfish, what do they amount to, when the fact remains that she is the centre of our whole life?"

Mr. McGill was silent. He was remembering that he had no son; but a glimpse of Jean at the end of the garden walk brought back his smile.

His wife continued: "I want to consult you, John. I have to begin by asking a great sacrifice from Jean. The room that was Jean's nursery and has been her play-room and work-room lately, that room has to be used for the little Ruth. I have to turn Jean out of it."

"You mean we must have a bigger house? I hate moving."

"This is our home — let us stay in it. I would rather not change my home or my way of living."

Jean's mother said to her that day: "I want you to think carefully about something, and help decide which would be better, to give up our home, the house and the garden and the trees, and go to live in a larger house, or else to change your play-room back to a nursery, and give it up to the baby."

"I've had it always. It's my room. My things are in it. It's my room."

"Don't say till you have thought about it. That's the way your papa and I do — we think things out — puzzling things."

All day long Jean's mind was filled with what grown-up people call "conflicting thoughts" — thoughts that fight. On one side were lined

up: "I won't give up my room to anybody — it's mine. That baby is a perfect stranger — I never saw her even. She need n't take my room away just because she has n't any father and mother. I wish she would stay where she is." Jean's face was not pretty then, for faces are made by thoughts.

On the other side they formed into line: "Poor little thing, poor little dear! Not even knowing what has happened to her, and I've got *such* a father and mother! Oh, I want a little sister, and she'd be just the one. And, oh, how lovely my room would look with everything pink and white in it, and a cradle and a crib!"

The thoughts had their fight back and forth till a victory was won. Jean told her mother at bedtime that she knew she could make a beautiful play-room at the sunshiny end of the attic. "Besides, I don't play with toys any more, of course."

"You can call it your 'study in the third story.' People like to have studies away from the rest of the house. Your father thinks we might finish off a little room and have favorite things in it, some books and some pictures."

Jean was all on fire with this project.

There were busy preparations for the little Ruth. They were watched by Jean with that queer new feeling that it was all for somebody else. Her young aunts hovered about the new nursery, without much notice of their niece. Her mother was "absorbed," and Jean must wait for attention to her own affairs.

All Mrs. McGill's love and sorrow for her cousin Amy went out to care for Amy's little daughter. Tears would fill her eyes as she made ready for baby Ruth.

"Mamma, don't cry. I'll help love her," said Jean, nestling to her mother's side.

The day arrived when the nurse was set down at their door with the child in her arms. "Fast asleep," she said.

"She little knows." And Mrs. McGill took the baby to her heart.

Jean was watching and kept silence as long as she could. "Oh, let me," she begged — "let me take her!"

"Little mother!" Mrs. McGill smiled, with a look of love for both.

The baby opened her eyes, and at the strange face, set up a cry that wounded Jean, overflowing

with welcome. "Oh, mother, take her if she is afraid of me. Take her quick!"

But little Ruth stopped crying, and changed to an angelic smile.

"Look, look!" cried Jean. "See, see! Now she knows I'm her little mother. I know what 'little mothers' are. I read a piece about them — little poor girls that take care of the babies. I shall be just the same, though this is a rich baby."

"When shall you tell her that her real father and mother went to Europe and were drowned?" Jean inquired squarely.

"I shall tell her before her schoolmates have a chance to, not any sooner."

"They talk all the time at school about her now. She's the principal subject. They want to come and look at her."

The little Ruth in her baby carriage gathered a procession of admiring attendants. Two or three little girls, charmed from their play, would head the line, turning each moment to smile on the baby. Jean walked in proud possession beside the white perambulator, which was followed up by three or four privileged little girls, admitted by Jean to familiar acquaintance with her

young charge. Little Ruth sat very erect, with hands going up and down "for joy," and with gracious smiles for everybody, "like a baby princess," said the "little mother."

"But, Mamma, she's dearest when she's asleep in her crib. Then's when I stand and look at her. Sometimes, I tell you, Mamma, what I think: I think she's gone off to heaven in her sleep to visit her father and her mother. That's the way she looks."

Jean would say, "Oh, let *me* get her to sleep!" And she learned lullabies to sing by the baby's side. The one Aunt Rosalie taught her she loved best. It was written by the great Martin Luther, and this was the little song: —

"Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

"The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh."

It was a new Jean, a tender, loving little Jean, that watched the baby go fast asleep as her song ended.

"Better not forget your lessons, my girl," said her father. "School is your business."

"Little mother, too," Jean pleaded. "I'm teaching Ruth lots and lots of things. She's my pupil."

"Rosalie is telling us how to train her Will. Rose learned at college," laughed Mrs. McGill.

"Did I get mine trained?" asked Jean.

"You are getting it all the time," her mother nodded. "Doing something at least once a day that you don't want to do, according to the philosophers."

"Oh," sighed Jean, "sometimes it's a good many more than one," and went skipping off to school.

Her parents stood together, and watched her out of sight.

"Jean is coming out with qualities I never suspected in her," said Mrs. McGill.

"You thought her a rather hard little piece. I knew better."

"Jean is lovely with the baby. I must catch her expression some day with my camera. I shall call the picture 'Little Mother.'"

XIV

“O BEAUTIFUL! MY COUNTRY!”

IT was May, 1917, and the War had “come.” Jean’s father looked up from his newspaper. “It is just three years ago that we were over there — fortunate that we went when we did. Do you remember that adventure of the doll?”

“Oh, Papa, if you only would n’t tell that story to people! I was such a little girl then.”

“If you are thirteen now, you are just the age of the men and women who will have to make the new world. For there’s going to be a new world.”

Jean listened gravely. She had never before heard her father say such a tremendous thing or speak so solemnly.

“You children would better understand what is going on, and know why we are waving flags. What was that verse of Lowell’s that you put into your Tract?”

“O Beautiful! my Country!” Jean threw back her head and her eyes shone.

"That was in the Civil War time. Now the great call has come again."

Jean listened.

"Men are not born to be the property of other men. We've said so in our Declaration of Independence, and now we are going to stand by our word. I don't say we are perfect, we Americans. We've faults enough of our own, but we've got hold of an idea, and we are trying to work it out and we are going to do it."

"Liberty — everybody's liberty!" Jean's eyes shone again.

"We don't half appreciate how free we Americans have been, free all our lives to go about our business, and to reap where we have sown."

"I haven't been grateful enough to my country for the safety and happiness of my life," said Jean's mother. "There is something finer than I ever realized before — ideas, ideals, that are our real America, in spite of all our mistakes. I love Jean's verse, 'O Beautiful! my Country!' How can we keep her beautiful, noble, ideal, for all the world, — how can we all help to do it?"

"We've got to fight out this war to the end," said Jean's father soberly.

The heavy and sorrowful word War made them silent. They were thinking of Jean's young uncle, already an enlisted soldier. His mother had made her supreme sacrifice for her country when she bade him go, and Jean's mother hardly less, when she gave her only brother.

Things were happening fast in the family. The bright-faced young uncle departed for a training-camp. Aunt Rosalie was now engaged to be married, and her lover asked her if she were willing to marry a soldier and let him leave for the front.

"We are to have the wedding on Wednesday — no frills, no bridesmaids, but just Dorothy to stand close by me, and Jean. Oh, if I could go, too! Perhaps I may. Dorothy's Fred has enlisted, too. Well, they would n't be the men we love if they were n't that sort, perfectly splendid, both of them. And Dick hates War, too, — loathes it. There is n't any glamour after these three years and all we know about it. But you have a feeling, — I can't explain it, — you know as you never did before that you have a soul and that your country has a soul, and you've got to save it. When I look into Dick's eyes, it

is clear as daylight to me. I want him to go if it breaks my heart. Oh, *Mother!*”

“I’d rather do Red Cross work than anything else in the world,” said Jean to her father. “Oh, can’t I go and stay all day? If you say I can, Mamma will say so, too. Please!”

“Jean, let’s have a talk. Do you know what Democracy is?”

Nobody could have been readier with an answer, for Jean had many times repeated the Gettysburg Speech for visitors at school.

“It’s ‘government of the people, by the people, for the people.’”

“And that it ‘shall not perish from the earth,’ is just what we are fighting for. But don’t you see that that kind of government all depends on what sort of ‘people’ they are?”

“They’ve got to be *fine*,” said Jean, kindling.

“The foundations this country rests on are the school-children of 1917. They are going to be the People, whose freedom we are fighting for now. They are an army. They have as great a duty as an army, Jean. They have to get the best Training, they have to be Prepared, for the sake of the future of the country. There won’t

be any country if they are n't. Just remember, you are going to be America, and you want America to be something fine. Well, it's up to you children."

"You know what Preparedness is," her father continued. "You have heard a lot about it. The young folks of this country have n't an hour to lose. They have to get ready for the biggest tasks the world ever called for. Stick to school, Jean. I say it to the children, but I say it to the teachers, too. You are both of you doing the best you can for your country. There could n't be a worse thing happen to us now than to let education go to pieces — to have our schools and colleges lose spirit, lose their interest, let down their standards, excuse people from this, that, and the other thing.

"Go ahead and get an education, Jean, so you can have a capital time yourself, — that's all right, — but get yourself ready to be a good citizen of a democracy, and help carry on the new world. Your mother and I think if you give two afternoons a week to relief work, it's quite enough."

"How fast you have been growing up, Jean, since the War began," said her grandmother thoughtfully.

"I shan't be a little girl much longer," Jean answered, with satisfaction.

"Not if this War lasts," Mrs. Dale said, with a sigh.

Jean rushed to her, "Oh, Grandma, *dear*, don't be so sad about Uncle Ben. He'll come home again."

"We don't know what's before us, my precious child."

In these days Mrs. Dale sat knitting, knitting, and living over in her thoughts every incident in the childhood of her boy. She seemed to have forgotten the years of his manhood.

"You ought to hear Leonard Cheever. He's crazy to go, but he is n't quite eighteen, and they won't let him. He hopes the War will last till he is old enough."

"The child!" sighed Grandma.

"Anyway, Boy Scouts can wear khaki, and that's some comfort."

Mrs. Dale felt old, so old, as she listened, but she managed to speak gaily.

"Well, Jean, if you are too young and I am too old, I know a regiment that you and I can join." She threw down her knitting with a bright smile.

"We can both join the regiment of Cheerfulness. That is one thing we can do to help. And let us see how many recruits we can get."

"All the people that are the wrong age and can't do anything else!" Jean was fired with the idea.

"Our regiment will be soldiers, too, because courage is the great thing, whether it is Ben or Ben's mother."

Mrs. Dale put out her hand to a book. "I was reading Lowell's 'Commemoration Ode.'"

"That's 'Beautiful, my Country,'" said Jean joyfully.

Her grandmother read the last lines: —

"What words divine of lover or of poet
Could tell our love and make thee know it,
Among the Nations bright beyond compare?
What were our lives without thee?
What all our lives to save thee?
We reckon not what we gave thee;
We will not dare to doubt thee;
But ask whatever else, and we will dare!"

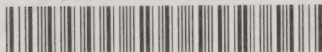
She laid down the book and repeated: —

"What were our lives without thee?
What all our lives to save thee?"

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE . MASSACHUSETTS
U . S . A



BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 09900 250 1



